

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, December 18, 1998

The President's Radio Address

December 12, 1998

Good morning. This month, as Americans begin to prepare for winter, our Nation's farmers begin to prepare for the spring planting ahead. But this year has been very hard on farmers—for some, the hardest in nearly two decades—and many are strained to the breaking point. Today I want to talk about what we're doing to help America's farmers weather these hard times and to build a stronger safety net to protect them for years to come.

We're living in a remarkable time of prosperity and even greater promise for our future. Our economy is the strongest in a generation, with more than 17 million new jobs, family incomes rising, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, the lowest inflation in more than 30 years, the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years, and the highest homeownership in history.

America's farmers have helped to build this new prosperity, but far too many of our farming communities are not reaping its benefits. Flood and drought and crop disease have wiped out entire harvests in some parts of the country. Plummeting prices here at home and collapsing markets in Asia have threatened the livelihood of some farming communities.

Wherever we live and whatever work we do, every American has a stake in the strength of rural America. America's farmers are the backbone of our economy and the lifeblood of our land. Our farming families stand for the values that have kept our Nation strong for over 220 years: hard work, faith and family, perseverance, and patience. We can't afford to let them fail.

Last summer we took action to ease the immediate crisis on our farms. We began buying millions of tons of wheat and other food to ease the burden of dropping prices here at home and to feed hungry people in

Africa, Russia, and all over the world. I signed legislation to speed farm program payments to farmers, who need the money now to start planting for next spring. And I called on the Congress to take action to help farmers survive this year's one-two punch from Mother Nature and the marketplace.

I am pleased to say that this October, as part of our balanced budget, I signed legislation that included a \$6 billion plan for farmers in need. This November we started putting the plan into action, with nearly \$3 billion in income assistance to farmers who have seen their profits wither as crop prices fell. Today I am pleased to announce the next major step to ease the crisis on our farms, nearly \$2½ billion in emergency aid for farmers who have lost crops and livestock.

But with too many farm families still in danger of losing their land, and with crop prices still far too low, we know we must do more to strengthen the safety net for our Nation's farmers. Government has an important role to play in meeting this challenge, but it's not something Government can do alone. Ultimately, America's farmers will keep America's farms growing strong.

We know that no one can fully predict the changing weather or changing prices, but every farmer knows that crop insurance is one of the best ways to protect against the worst risks of farming. In good times, crop insurance gives farming families the security they need to thrive and grow. And in hard times, crop insurance can mean the difference between a spring planting and a spring sale of the family farm. But far too many farmers don't have crop insurance at all or only buy the bare minimum, not enough to withstand a really devastating year.

We need to do more to enable family farmers to fully protect themselves in hard times. That's why I am pleased to announce the funds we're releasing include \$400 million in new incentives for farmers to buy crop

insurance. We'll give farmers a one-time premium discount of up to 35 percent when they expand their crop insurance, and that will give our farming families greater security and more peace of mind.

Together, these steps will help thousands of farmers around our country to recover from this difficult time and plant a seed of hope for the future, not only for stronger farms but for a stronger America in the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on December 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Lawton Chiles

December 12, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Governor Lawton Chiles. Lawton Chiles was a close friend of mine for many years. He served the people of Florida as an elected official for over 40 years, always putting the interests of ordinary people first with his unique political style. As a leader, he has been an indefatigable champion of Florida's children and families and a steadfast protector of the environment. He displayed courage time and time again, most recently challenging the Nation's top cigarette makers and emerging victorious.

Lawton was a statesman, a role model, and one of the most successful and respected public officials in the later half of the 20th century. He set a benchmark for how public servants will be judged and, I believe, created a legacy that will endure for generations.

Lawton never forgot the thousands of ordinary citizens he met, as he walked the highways and backroads of his State, whom he served so well. And they will never forget him.

Remarks at the Arrival Ceremony in Tel Aviv, Israel

December 13, 1998

President and Mrs. Weizman, Prime Minister and Mrs. Netanyahu, first of all, on behalf of my family and our entire delegation, I would like to thank you for coming out here at this very late hour to welcome us. Hillary and Chelsea and I and all the Americans have been looking forward to this trip. I am delighted to be back in Israel.

As President Weizman said, this is the fourth time I have come here as President to reaffirm America's unbreakable ties to Israel, to reaffirm our unshakable commitment to Israel's security, and this time to fulfill the pledge I made at the Wye talks to speak with the people of Israel and the Palestinians about the benefits of peace and to stand by you as you take risks for a just, lasting, and secure peace. The United States will walk this road with Israel every step of the way.

Peacemaking has opened historic opportunities to Israel, but each step forward has been tempered with pain and understandable feelings of ambivalence when questions arise as to whether agreements are being implemented fully.

We share the conviction that without security, the peace process always will be clouded for the vast majority of Israelis who seek only to live normal lives as a free people in their own country, and we are determined that Israel's just requirements for security be met. At the same time, we believe that, for two peoples who are fated to share this land, peace is not simply an option among many but the only choice that can avert still more years of bloodshed, apprehension, and sorrow.

That is why I am here. In the past few weeks, the people of Israel, through their Government and Knesset, have endorsed the Wye River agreement, recognizing the promise it holds for putting the peace process on track and creating a positive environment for dealing with the complex and difficult final status talks.

I want to, again, but for the first time in Israel, pay tribute to the Prime Minister and the representatives of his government for those long, arduous, difficult talks at Wye, often accompanied with sleepless nights. I believe it was the right thing to do. I believed it then. I believe it now. But both sides now must face the challenge of implementing Wye.

I will discuss that with the Prime Minister and his colleagues tomorrow and later in my meeting with Chairman Arafat. Then on Tuesday our family will have the chance to go to Bethlehem and Masada to explore more of this magnificent country and its sacred heritage.

Again, I thank you for welcoming us. I thank you for the struggles you have waged for freedom and for security. I thank you for the efforts you now make for peace. It is good to be back.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 midnight at the Ben-Gurion International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President Ezer Weizman of Israel and his wife, Reuma; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and his wife, Sarah; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, Israel December 13, 1998

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, I want to welcome you and your entire delegation—the Secretary of State, the National Security Adviser, and your exceptional team—for coming here on this mission of peace and for your understanding of our concerns.

We spent many hours in Wye River, and there and in our conversations this morning, I've come to appreciate and admire your extraordinary ability to empathize and the seriousness with which you examine every issue. Your visit here is part of the implementation of the Wye River accords.

Now, this was not an easy agreement for us, but we did our part. And we are prepared to do our part based on Palestinian compli-

ance. When I say that we did our part, you know that within 2 weeks we withdrew from territory, released prisoners, and opened the Gaza Airport, precisely as we undertook to do.

The Palestinians, in turn, were to live up to a series of obligations in the sphere of security and ending incitement and violence and the repeal of the Palestinian Charter and in commitments to negotiate a final settlement in order to achieve permanent peace between us. I regret to say that none of these conditions have been met.

Palestinians proceeded to unilaterally declare what the final settlement would be. Coming out of Wye, they said again and again that regardless of what happens in the negotiations, on May 4th of 1999, they will unilaterally declare a state, divide Jerusalem, and make its eastern half the Palestinian capital. This is a gross violation of the Oslo and Wye accords, which commit the parties to negotiate a mutually agreed final settlement.

Mr. Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must officially and unequivocally renounce this attempt. I think no one can seriously expect Israel to hand over another inch of territory unless and until such an unambiguous correction is made.

I said that there are other violations. The Palestinians, I'm afraid, began a campaign of incitement. At Wye, as those who are here well know, we agreed to release Palestinian prisoners but not terrorists with blood on their hands or members of Hamas who are waging war against us. No sooner did we release the agreed number of prisoners in the first installment that the Palestinian Authority refused to acknowledge what they agreed to at Wye. Falsely charging Israel with violating the prisoner release clause, Palestinian leaders openly incited for violence and riots, which culminated in a savage near-lynching of an Israeli soldier. And the Palestinian Authority organized other violent demonstrations. Therefore, the Palestinian Authority must stop incitement and violence at once, and they must do so fully and permanently.

There has also been some downgrading on parts of the security cooperation between us, and the Palestinian Authority must restore

this cooperation again, fully and permanently. They must live up to their other obligations in the Wye agreement in the fields of weapons collections, illegal weapons collections, reducing the size of their armed forces, and the like.

Now, I stress that none of these are new conditions. All are integral parts of the Wye and Oslo agreements to which we are committed. We hope that tomorrow the Palestinian Authority will once and for all live up to at least one of their obligations. And if the PNC members will vote in sufficient numbers to annul the infamous Palestinian Charter, that will be a welcome development. And it's important, 5 years after the promise to do so at Oslo, to see this happen, would be a welcome and positive development.

I think this is—it's just as important to see strict adherence to the other obligations in order to reinject confidence into the peace process and to get this process moving again, where Israel will also do its part.

Mr. President, I'm sure that we can achieve peace between Palestinians and Israelis if we stand firm on Palestinian compliance. I very much hope that you will be able to persuade the Palestinians what I know you deeply believe and I believe, that violence and peace are simply incompatible. Because, ultimately, what is required is not merely a checklist of correcting Palestinian violations but, I think, a real change of conduct by the Palestinian leadership. And they must demonstrate that they have abandoned the path of violence and adopted the path of peace. For us to move forward, they must scrupulously adhere to their commitments under the Wye agreement, on which we have all worked so hard.

And may I say, on a personal and national note and international note, that if there's anyone who can help bring the peace process to a satisfactory conclusion, it is you, President Clinton. Your devotion to this cause, your perseverance, your tireless energy, your commitment have been an inspiration to us all. May it help us restore peace and hope to our land and to our peoples.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Prime Minister. I thank you for your statement and for your warm welcome. I would

say to the people of Israel, I was told before I came here that no previous Presidents had ever visited Israel more than once, and this is my fourth trip here. I may be subject to tax assessment if I come again in the next 2 years, but I am always pleased to be here.

I want to thank you, also, and the members of your team, for the exhausting effort which was made at Wye over those 9 days, the time we spent together, the sleepless nights, and the extraordinary effort to put together a very difficult, but I think sound, agreement.

Let me begin by talking about some of the things that we have discussed today. We've had two brief private meetings: one, a breakfast meeting with our wives this morning, and then a brief private meeting, and then our extended meeting with our two teams. I want to begin where I always do. America has an unshakable commitment to the security of the State and the people of Israel. We also have an unshakable commitment to be a partner in the pursuit of a lasting, comprehensive peace.

I have told the Prime Minister that I will soon submit to the Congress a supplemental request for \$1.2 billion to meet Israel's security needs related to implementing the Wye River agreement. Only if those needs are met can the peace process move forward.

At the same time, I am convinced, as I think we all are, everyone who has dealt with this problem over any period of time, that a lasting peace properly achieved is the best way to safeguard Israel's security over the long run.

Last month, at the conclusion of the Wye talks, Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat and I agreed that it would be useful for me to come to the region to help to maintain the momentum and to appear tomorrow before the PNC and the other Palestinian groups that will be assembled. I also want to commend the Prime Minister for the steps he has taken to implement the Wye agreement which he just outlined.

He has secured his government support for significant troop withdrawal from the West Bank and begun the implementation of that withdrawal, reached an agreement that allowed for the opening of the Gaza airport, and he began the difficult process of prisoner releases.

The Palestinian Authority has taken some important steps with its commitments, a deepening security cooperation with Israel, acting against terrorism, issuing decrees for the confiscation of illegal weapons, and dealing with incitement, taking concrete steps to reaffirm the decision to amend the PLO Charter, which will occur tomorrow.

Have the Palestinians fulfilled all their commitments? They certainly could be doing better to preempt violent demonstrations in the street. This is a terribly important matter. I also agree that matters that have been referred consistent with the Oslo agreement for final status talks should be left there and should be subject to negotiations. But in other areas, there has been a forward progress on the meeting of the commitments.

Now, I know that each step forward can be excruciatingly difficult and that now real efforts have to be made on both sides to regain the momentum. We just had a good discussion about the specific things that the Israelis believe are necessary for the Palestinians to do to regain the momentum. And we talked a little bit about how we might get genuine communication going again so that the necessary steps can be taken to resume the structured implementation of the Wye River agreement, which is, I think, part of what makes it work. At least it made it work in the minds of the people who negotiated it, and it can work in the lives of the people who will be affected by it if both sides meet all their commitments, and only if they do.

Each side has serious political constraints; I think we all understand that. Provocative pronouncements, unilateral actions can be counterproductive, given the constraints that each side has. But in the end, there has been a fundamental decision made to deal with this through honest discussion and negotiation. That is the only way it can be done. It cannot be done by resorting to other means when times get difficult. And again I say the promise of Wye cannot be fulfilled by violence or by statements or actions which are inconsistent with the whole peace process. Both sides should adhere to that.

Let me also just say one other word about regional security. I think Israelis are properly concerned with the threat of weapons of mass destruction development, with the

threat of missile delivery systems. We are working with Israel to help to defend itself against such threats, in particular, through the Arrow antiballistic missile program. We've also just established a joint strategic planning committee as a forum to discuss how we can continue to work together on security matters.

We're going to take a couple of questions, I know, but again I would like to say in closing, Mr. Prime Minister, I appreciate the courage you showed at Wye, your farsightedness in seeking peace and in taking personal and political risks for it, which should now be readily apparent to anyone who has followed the events of the last 6 weeks. Your determination, your tenacity to build an Israel that is both secure and at peace is something that I admire and support. And I think, if we keep working at it, we can keep making progress.

Thank you very much.

House Judiciary Committee Vote on Impeachment/Palestinian Vote to Amend the Charter

Q. Mr. President, what is your reaction to the decision of the Judiciary Committee of the House yesterday? Do you intend to resign, as did President Nixon? And with your permission, one question to Prime Minister Netanyahu in Hebrew.

[At this point, a question was asked in Hebrew, and the translation follows.]

Interpreter. Mr. Prime Minister, you have, to some extent, appointed Mr. Clinton to act as a referee between the Israelis and the Palestinians. He will appear tomorrow in Gaza where the decision of the committee will be to revoke its objection to the existence of Israel. What will you do if this decision is taken, and how will you react to issues facing you with the Cabinet regarding a no-confidence vote?

President Clinton. My reaction to the committee vote is that I wasn't surprised. I think it's been obvious to anyone who is following it for weeks that the vote was foreordained. And now it is up to the Members of the House of Representatives to vote their conscience on the Constitution and the law,

which I believe are clear. And I have no intention of resigning. It's never crossed my mind.

[At this point, Prime Minister Netanyahu answered in Hebrew.]

Prime Minister Netanyahu. If you can translate all of that, you're a genius. [Laughter]

[The Prime Minister's remarks were translated as follows.]

Interpreter. In essence, we expect to see the Palestinian side revoke the Palestinian Charter. We also expect the Palestinians to meet their commitment to stop incitement. If, in fact, tomorrow the Palestinian Charter is revoked, we will view it as a success of our policy. What we merely expect is the Palestinians honor their commitments. And that's our expectation.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I would say that's a pretty good abbreviation of what I said. [Laughter] You have a great future as an editor. [Laughter]

The President. We all need one. [Laughter]

House Impeachment Vote

Q. Mr. President, how confident are you that you can avoid impeachment in the full House next week, and are you planning any particular kind of outreach additional to lawmakers or the public?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's up to—it's a question of whether each Member will simply vote his or her conscience based on the Constitution and the law. And I don't know what's going to happen. That's up to them. It's out of my hands. If any Member wishes to talk to me or someone on my staff, we would make ourselves available to them. But otherwise, I think it's important that they be free to make this decision and that they not be put under any undue pressure from any quarter.

Many of them have said they feel such pressure, but I can't comment on that because I haven't talked directly to many members of the House caucus, the Republican caucus, and I have talked to those—a few—who said they wanted to talk to me. Otherwise I have not. I don't think it's appropriate

for me to be personally calling people; unless they send word to me that there is some question they want to ask or something they want to say, I don't think it's appropriate.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, you said that now it's up to the Members of the House to decide——

Prime Minister Netanyahu. May I ask a favor. You are free to ask any one of your questions, but I think the President has come here on a very clear message, on a very clear voyage of peace, and I believe that it would be appropriate also to ask one or two questions on the peace process. I would like to know the answers, too.

Q. This would be exactly my second question. The first one is about what will happen Thursday if the Members of the House will decide about impeachment, if in this case, whether you will consider resignation. And second question, about the peace process, after all what you see now, after you hear the Prime Minister, don't you think you were wrong in the Wye memorandum, that you figured you'd get an agreement which both sides cannot comply?

President Clinton. Well, the answer to both questions is, no. And let me amplify on your second question. No, I don't think it was wrong. Look, if this were easy, it would have been done a long time ago. And we knew that in the Wye agreement it would be difficult for both sides to comply. Actually, the first 2 weeks were quite hopeful. In the first phase, I think there was quite good compliance on both sides. And I think the Prime Minister feels that way as well.

A number of things happened with which you are very familiar which made the atmosphere more tense in the ensuing weeks. And one of the things that I hope to do while I'm here, in addition to going and meeting with the Palestinian groups, including the PNC, is to do what I did this morning, to listen very carefully to the Prime Minister and to his government about what specific concerns they have in terms of the agreement and compliance with it and then try to resolve those and listen to the Palestinians, as I will, so that we can get this process going again.

I find that when the parties are talking to each other and establish an atmosphere of understanding of the difficulty of each other's positions and deal with each other in good faith, we make petty good progress. But there is a long history here. And 9 days at Wye, or 2 weeks of implementing, you know, it can't overcome all that history, plus which, there are political constraints and imperatives in each position which make it more likely that tensions will arise.

But the fact that this has been hard to implement doesn't mean it was a mistake. It means it was real. Look, if we had made an agreement that was easy to implement, it would have dealt with no difficult circumstances, and so we'd be just where we are now, except worse off.

We have seen in the first phase of implementation that good things can happen on the security side from the point of view of the Israelis and on the development of the territory from the point of view of the Palestinians—and the airport—if there is genuine trust and actual compliance. And so what we have to do is to get more actual compliance and in the process rebuild some of that trust.

Perjury and Censure

Q. Mr. President, some Republicans want you to go further than a statement of contrition. They say that they want an admission of perjury. And you willing to do that? And what do you think about Chairman Hyde and the Republican leadership opposing a vote in the full House on censure?

President Clinton. Well, on the second question, I think you ought to ask them whether they're opposed to it because they think that it might pass since, apparently, somewhere around three-quarters of the American people think that's the right thing to do.

On the first question, the answer is: No, I can't do that, because I did not commit perjury. If you go back to the hearing, we had four prosecutors—two Republicans, two Democrats—one the head of President Reagan's criminal justice division, who went through the law in great detail and explained that, that this is not a perjury case. And there

was no credible argument on the other side. So I have no intention of doing that.

Now, was the testimony in the deposition difficult and ambiguous and unhelpful? Yes, it was. That's exactly what I said in the grand jury testimony, myself, and I agree with what Mr. Ruff said about it. Mr. Ruff answered questions, you know, for hours and hours and hours and tried to deal with some of the concerns the committee had on that. And I thought he did an admirable job in acknowledging the difficulty of the testimony.

But I could not admit to doing something that I am quite sure I did not do. And I think if you look at the law, if you look at the legal decisions, and if you look at what the Republican as well as the Democratic prosecutors said, I think that's entitled to great weight. And I have read or seen nothing that really overcomes the testimony that they gave on that question.

Jonathan Pollard

Q. What about Jonathan Pollard, Mr. President? What about Jonathan Pollard? Can you—[inaudible].

President Clinton. Yes, I can. I have instituted the review that I pledged to the Prime Minister. We've never done this on a case before, but I told him I would do it, and we did it. And my Counsel, Mr. Ruff, has invited the Justice Department and all the law enforcement agencies under it, and all the other security, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies in the Government and interested parties to say what they think about the Pollard case, to do so by sometime in January. And I will review all that, plus whatever arguments are presented to me on the other side for the reduction of the sentence. And I will make a decision in a prompt way.

But we have instituted this review which as I said is unprecedented. We are giving everyone time to present their comments, and I will get comments on both sides of the issue, evaluate it, and make a decision.

Q. I would like to ask—

President Clinton. What did you say? They're demanding equal time, three and three?

Q. I just want to ask the Prime Minister—

President Clinton. Oh, he wants to ask you a question. That's good.

Q. Prime Minister, can you explain, perhaps to the American people, why you think Mr. Pollard is worthy of release at this point?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Jonathan Pollard did something bad and inexcusable; he spied in the United States; he collected information on behalf of the Israeli Government. I was the first Prime Minister—and this is the first government—to openly admit it. We think that he should have served his time, and he did. He served for close to 13 years. And all that I appealed to President Clinton for is merely a humanitarian appeal. It is not based on exonerating Mr. Pollard. There is no exoneration for it. It is merely that he has been virtually in solitary confinement for 13 years. It's a very, very heavy sentence.

And since he was sent by us on a mistaken mission—not to work against the United States but, nevertheless, to break the laws of the United States—we hope that, on a purely humanitarian appeal, a way will be found to release him.

That is all I can tell you. It is not political. It is not to exonerate him. It is merely to end a very, very sorry case that has afflicted him and the people of Israel.

NOTE: The President's 167th news conference began at 1:50 p.m. in the Office of the Prime Minister. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine National Council (PNC).

Remarks With President Ezer Weizman of Israel on Lighting the Menorah in Jerusalem

December 13, 1998

President Weizman. Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, I don't think that you will understand Hebrew by now, but with your affection to our country, with your support, I think this will come, too. [Laughter] If I may switch over to my Biblical Hebrew:

[At this point, President Weizman began speaking in Hebrew. The following translation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary.]

Beloved audience, dear audience, dear children—give me your hand, dear, you sang beautifully. I am happy to see you in our home, and I hope that this festival of Hanukkah will be a holiday which, perhaps, will rekindle a light in the right direction to strengthen the foundations of the State of Israel in its economy, its security, immigration, science, education, and its road to peace.

The President of the United States has come to us. He has come not just as a guest but to help, and we must appreciate this and see if it is possible to “push the cart forward” that, in the rest of the world, is known as being “stuck in the mud” but to us, rather is “stuck in the sand.” I don't know if it's easier to get out of sand than from mud. In any case, we must free it, and I hope, I am sure, that our Government will make all the necessary efforts.

The subject is not easy nor simple; it's complicated and complex. And from this night of Hanukkah, which is also the eve of the 21st century in less than 13 months, we will also begin to see a different type of life from our lives to date, despite our having made great achievements in the last 50 years.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Mrs. Weizman. Let me say a special word of welcome in greetings on behalf of Hillary and myself to all the children who are here, and my thanks to these wonderful voices we have just heard sing. And I congratulate this young man for holding the candle all that time and not burning himself. Congratulations! [Laughter]

It is our great honor, all of the American delegation here, the members of our administration and the Members of Congress, to celebrate the first day of Hanukkah with the President and some of Israel's finest young people. This is a joyous time of year for Jewish people everywhere, here in Israel, in America, around the world, a moment to cherish your extraordinary past, to strive for a future worthy of your history.

On this occasion, you celebrate not simply a long week of happiness but thousands of years of triumph over adversity. You thank God not only for miracles but for hard-earned achievement. May this Menorah bring light through wisdom and illumination.

May it bring warmth through faith and fellowship. May it kindle a divine spark of peace touching all the peoples and places of the Holy Land. May it bring hope that after 50 years of building, security finally will come to all the people of Israel. And may it bring more than hope; may it ignite in each of you the will and strength to bring these hopes to reality.

All of you in this way can serve as candles full of light. Let our descendants look back at Israel at the turn of this new century and say the words that every Jewish child knows from the letters on the dreidel: A great miracle happened here.

Happy Hanukkah.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:20 p.m. in the Foyer of Beit Hannassi. In his remarks, he referred to President Weizman's wife, Reuma; and Moshe Metbabo, who lit the first candle in the menorah.

Statement on Crime Rates

December 13, 1998

The preliminary crime data released by the FBI today confirm that crime rates in America are continuing to decline for the seventh straight year. During the first 6 months of 1998, serious crime fell by another 5 percent—with large reductions in murder and other violent crimes leading the way. If these trends hold for the remainder of the year, the number of murders will have been cut by nearly one-third since Vice President Gore and I took office. This is remarkable progress, and it shows that our strategy of more police, tougher gun laws, and better crime prevention is making a difference. But our work is far from done. In the coming year, as we finish the job of putting 100,000 more police on the streets, we must continue to do everything we can to make all of our communities safer.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12 but was embargoed for release until 6 p.m. on December 13.

Statement on the Death of Morris Udall

December 13, 1998

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Representative Morris Udall. Mo Udall was a leader whose uncommon wisdom, wit, and dedication won the love of his colleagues and the respect of all Americans. It was my pleasure to award him the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award a President can bestow.

Mo Udall represented the people of Arizona for more than three decades and guided the Nation forward on issues ranging from the reform of our election laws to improving the Postal Service. As a Presidential candidate and a leader of our party, his was an articulate voice reminding us of what our Nation can achieve when we leave no one behind. Above all, he was a devoted steward of the land that God gave us and was responsible for the preservation of some of our most important wilderness areas. It is fitting that the easternmost point of the United States, in the Virgin Islands, and the westernmost point, in Guam, are both named "Udall Point." The Sun will never set on the legacy of Mo Udall.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Norma, their six children and many grandchildren, and the people of Arizona.

Remarks to the People of Israel in Jerusalem

December 13, 1998

Thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking the Prime Minister for his leadership for peace and his leadership of Israel; Mrs. Netanyahu, members of the Israeli Government; to the distinguished American delegation here. I want to say a special word of appreciation to the young man who spoke first, Ben Mayost. Didn't he do a good job? [Applause]

This is my third trip to Jerusalem as President, my third time in this magnificent hall, and the young woman who was with me here last time on the stage, Liad Modrik, is also here. Thank you; I'm really glad to see you.

I'd like to also thank this magnificent choir, the Ankor Choir. Didn't they do a good job? They left, but they were great. I understand we have students here from Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer Sheva, Akko, and other cities. Welcome to you all.

We come here today to speak about the future of Israel and the Middle East—your future. Six weeks ago Prime Minister Netanyahu came to the United States to seek a new understanding with the Palestinian Authority on the best way to achieve peace with security. Today I come to Israel to fulfill a pledge I made to the Prime Minister and to Chairman Arafat at Wye River, to speak to Israelis and Palestinians about the benefits of peace, and to reaffirm America's determination to stand with you as you take risks for peace.

The United States will always stand with Israel, always remember that only a strong Israel can make peace. That is why we were, after all, your partners in security before we were partners for peace. Our commitment to your security is ironclad. It will not ever change.

The United States stood with Israel at the birth of your nation, at your darkest hour in 1973, through the long battle against terror, against Saddam Hussein's Scuds in 1991. And today, American marines and Patriot missiles are here in Israel exercising with the IDF. We have also stood with you as you reached out to your neighbors, always recognizing that only Israelis can make final decisions about your own future.

And as the Prime Minister said in his remarks about education for peace, we agree that peace must begin with a genuine transformation in attitudes. Despite all the difficulties, I believe that transformation has begun. Palestinians are recognizing that rejection of Israel will not bring them freedom, just as Israelis recognize that control over Palestinians will not bring you security.

As a result, in just the last few years you have achieved peace with Jordan, and the Arab world has accepted the idea of peace with Israel. The boycotts of the past are giving way to a future in which goods move across frontiers while soldiers are able to stay at home. The pursuit of peace has withstood

the gravest doubts. It has survived terrorist bombs and assassins' bullets.

Just a short while ago, this afternoon, Hillary and I visited the gravesite of Prime Minister Rabin with Mrs. Rabin, her daughter, and granddaughter. He was killed by one who hoped to kill the peace he worked so hard to advance. But the Wye memorandum is proof that peace is still alive, and it will live as long as the parties believe in it and work for it.

Of course, there have been setbacks, more misunderstandings, more disagreements, more provocations, more acts of violence. You feel Palestinians should prove in word and deed that their intentions have actually changed, as you redeploy from land on which tears and blood have been shed, and you are right to feel that.

Palestinians feel you should acknowledge they too have suffered and they, too, have legitimate expectations that should be met and, like Israel, internal political pressures that must be overcome. And they are right, too.

Because of all that has happened and the mountain of memories that has not yet been washed away, the road ahead will be hard. Already, every step forward has been tempered with pain. Each time the forces of reconciliation on each side have reached out, the forces of destruction have lashed out. The leaders at Wye knew that. The people of Israel know that.

Israel is full of good people today who do not hate but who have experienced too much sorrow and too much loss to embrace with joy each new agreement the peace process brings. As always, we must approach the task ahead without illusions but not without hope, for hope is not an illusion.

Every advance in human history, every victory for the human spirit, every victory in your own individual lives begins with hope, the capacity to imagine a better future, and the conviction that it can be achieved. The people of Israel, after all, have beaten the most impossible odds, overcome the most terrible evils on the way to the Promised Land. The idea of the Promised Land kept hope alive. In the remaining work to be done, the idea of peace and security in the Promised Land must keep hope alive.

For all you young people today, under all the complexities and frustrations of this moment, there lies a simple question: What is your vision for your future? There can be only two ways to answer that question. You could say that the only possible future for Israel is one of permanent siege, in which the ramparts hold and people stay alive, but the nation remains preoccupied with its very survival, subject to gnawing anxiety, limited in future achievement by the absence of real partnerships with your neighbors.

Perhaps you can live with that kind of future, but you should not accept it unless you are willing to say—and I will try to say properly—*ein breira*, there is no alternative. But if you are not willing to say that, not willing to give up on hope with no real gain in security, you must say, *yesh, breira*, there is an alternative.

If you are to build a future together, hard realities cannot be ignored. Reconciliation after all this trouble is not natural. The differences among you are not trivial. There is a history of heartbreak and loss. But the violent past and the difficult present do not have to be repeated forever.

In the historical relationship between Israelis and Palestinians, one thing and only one thing is predestined: You are bound to be neighbors. The question is not whether you will live side by side, but how you will live side by side.

Will both sides recognize there can be no security for either until both have security; that there will be no peace for either until both have peace? Will both sides seize this opportunity to build a future in which preoccupation with security, struggle, and survival can finally give way to a common commitment to keep all our young minds strong and unleash all your human potential?

Surely, the answer must be, yes. Israelis and Palestinians can reach that conclusion sooner, reducing the pain and violence they endure, or they can wait until later—more and more victims suffer more loss—and ultimately, the conclusion must be the same.

Your leaders came to an agreement at Wye because a majority of people on both sides have already said, "Now is the time to change."

I want to talk just a little bit about this agreement at Wye. It does not, by itself, resolve the fundamental problems that divide Israelis and Palestinians. It is a means to an end, not the end itself. But it does restore life to a process that was stalled for 18 months, and it will bring benefits that meet the requirements of both sides if both sides meet their obligations. Wye is an opportunity for both that must not be lost. Let me try to explain why.

Prime Minister Netanyahu went to Wye, rightly determined to ensure that the security of Israeli citizens is protected as the peace process moves forward. He fought hard, not to kill the peace but to make it real for all those Israelis who only want to live normal lives in their own country. And he succeeded in obtaining a set of systematic Palestinian security commitments and a structure for carrying them out.

The Palestinian Authority agreed to a comprehensive and continuous battle against terror. It pledged to combat terrorist organizations, to crack down on unlicensed weapons, to take action against incitement to terror. U.S.-Palestinian committees will be set up to review specific actions the Palestinians are taking in each of these areas and to recommend further steps. We also will submit to our Congress a \$1.2 billion package to help Israel meet its future security needs, including those growing out of the redeployments agreed to at Wye.

The agreement can benefit Israel in another way. It offers the prospect of continuing a process that is changing how most Palestinians define their interests and their relationship with you. More and more, Palestinians have begun to see that they have done more to realize their aspirations in 5 years of making peace than in 45 years of making war. They are beginning to see that Israel's mortal enemies are, in fact, their enemies, too, and that is in their interests to help to defeat the forces of terror.

This transformation, however, is clearly unfinished. It will not happen overnight. There will be bumps in the road, and there have been some already. The Palestinian leaders must work harder to keep the agreement and avoid the impression that unilateral

actions can replace agreed-upon negotiations. But it is vital that you, too, recognize the validity of this agreement and work to sustain it and all other aspects of the peace process.

Tomorrow I go to Gaza to address the members of the Palestinian National Council and other Palestinian organizations. I will witness the reaffirmation of their commitment to forswear fully, finally, and forever, all the provisions in their Charter that called for the destruction of Israel.

I will also make it clear that with rights come responsibilities, reminding people there that violence never was and never can be a legitimate tool, that it would be wrong and utterly self-defeating to resume a struggle that has taken Palestinians from one tragedy to another. I will ask the Palestinian leaders to join me in reaffirming what the vast majority of Muslims the world over believe, that tolerance is an article of faith and terrorism a travesty of faith. And I will emphasize that this conviction should echo from every Palestinian schoolhouse and mosque and television tower.

I will point out, of course, all the ways in which this Wye agreement benefits Palestinians: It provides for the transfer of more territory, the redeployment of more Israeli troops, safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, the opening of the airport in Gaza, other initiatives to lift their economic condition, and new commitments of international assistance to improve the lives of the Palestinian people.

In doing these things, this agreement benefits Israelis as well, for it is in Israel's interest to give the Palestinian economy space to breathe and the Palestinian people a chance to defeat the hopelessness that extremists exploit to unleash their terror. And it is surely in Israel's interest to deal with Palestinians in a way that permits them to feel a sense of dignity instead of despair.

The peace process will succeed if it comes with a recognition that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with—not at the expense of—the fulfillment of the other side's dreams. It will succeed when we understand that it is not just about mutual obligations but mutual interest, mutual recognition, mutual respect; when all agree there

is no sense in a tug-of-war over common ground.

It will succeed when we all recognize, as Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat did at Wye, that ultimately this can and must be a partnership between Israelis and Palestinians. It will succeed if both sides continue the work that Wye makes possible, if they face the hard decisions ahead so that the future continues to be shaped at the negotiating table, rather than by unilateral acts or declarations.

We cannot, of course, expect everyone to see that. There are still people in this region, indeed in every region, who believe that their unique cultures can thrive only behind walls that keep out those who are different, even if the price is mutual mistrust and hatred. There are some who still talk openly about the "threat" of peace because peacemaking requires making contact with the other side, recognizing the legitimacy of different faiths and different points of view, and openness to a world of competing ideas and values.

But I don't think that's the majority view in the Middle East any longer. What once was a conflict among mainstreams is evolving into a mainstream seeking peace. We must not let the conflict invade the mainstream of Israel or of the Palestinians or of any other group in this region again.

I believe you can not only imagine, you young people, but actually shape the kind of partnership that will give you the future you want. I think you can do it while protecting Israel's fundamental interests. To anyone who thinks that is impossible, I would ask you this: How many people thought Israel was possible when your grandparents were just people searching for a land? Who would have imagined the marvel Israel has become?

For decades, you lived in a neighborhood which rejected you. Yet, you not only survived and thrived but held fast to the traditions of tolerance and openness upon which this nation was founded. You were forced to become warriors, yet you never lost the thirst to make peace. You turned weakness into strength, and along the way, you built a partnership with the United States that is enduring and unassailable.

Now Israel enters its second half-century. You have nourished an ancient culture. You

have built from the desert a modern nation. You stand on the edge of a new century prepared to make the very most of it. You have given your children a chance to grow up and learn who they are, not just from stories of wandering and martyrdom but from the happy memories of people living good lives in a natural way. You have proven again and again that you are powerful enough to defeat those who would destroy you but strong and wise enough to make peace with those who are ready to accept you. You have given us every reason to believe that you can build a future on hope that is different from the past.

This morning the Prime Minister and Mrs. Netanyahu and Hillary and I had breakfast together, and he said something to me I'd like to repeat to you to make this point to all of you young people. He said: You know, there are three great ancient civilizations in the world—the Chinese civilization, the Indian civilization, and the Jewish civilization—all going back 4,000 years or more. The Chinese are 1.2 billion people; the Indians are nearly a billion people. To be sure, they have suffered invasion, loss in war; in the Indian case, colonization. But they have always had their land, and they have grown.

There are 12 million Jews in the world, driven from their homeland, subject to Holocaust, subject to centuries of prejudice. And yet, here you are. Here you are. If you can do this after 4,000 years, you can make this peace. Believe me, you can do this.

Years ago, before the foundation of Israel, Golda Meir said of her people, and I quote, "We only want that which is given naturally to all people of the world, to be masters of our own fate, only our fate, not the destiny of others; to live as a right and not on sufferance; to have the chance to bring the surviving Jewish children, of whom not so many are left in the world now, to this country, so that they may grow up like our youngsters who were born here, free of fear with heads high."

This hope that all of us can live a life of dignity when respecting the dignity of others is part of the heritage of values Israel shares with the United States. On this, the first day of Hanukkah, may this hope be the candle that lights Israel's path into the new century,

into a century of peace and security, with America always at your side.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. in the Ussishkin Hall at the Jerusalem Convention Center. In this remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and his wife, Sarah; Ben Mayost, chair, National Student Council; Liad Modrik, student council representative, Tel Aviv Center for the Performing Arts, during the President's March 1996 visit to Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Leah Rabin, widow of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, her daughter, Dalia Rabin Filosof, and her granddaughter, Noa Ben Artzi.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem

December 13, 1998

Thank you very much. Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Netanyahu, leaders and citizens of Israel, my fellow Americans. Let me begin by thanking the Prime Minister, his family, and his administration for the warm welcome accorded to me and Hillary and Chelsea and our entire group. This is, as I have said many times today, my fourth visit to Israel since I became President. Perhaps that fact alone says something about the unique relationship between our two nations.

Last spring I walked out onto the South Lawn at the White House to lead my fellow Americans in our celebration of your 50th birthday as a nation. And as I did that, I thought about how that great old house, where every President since our second President has lived for almost 200 years now, and how for the last 50 years it has been and now will forever be linked to Israel's destiny.

It was in the White House that Harry Truman recognized the State of Israel only 11 minutes after you had declared your independence. And, I might add, he did so over the objection of some of his most senior advisers. It was in the White House a year later that President Truman wept when Israel's Chief Rabbi told him, "God put you in your mother's womb so you would be the instrument to bring the rebirth of Israel after 2,000

years." Mr. Prime Minister, every President since Harry Truman has been strongly committed to the State of Israel and to Israel's security. No one should doubt that the United States will always stand with you.

Every President has also believed it is vital to Israel's security that together we seek peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Israel's own leaders again and again have said this, from Ben-Gurion to Golda Meir, Begin to Rabin, and Peres. Now you, Mr. Prime Minister, have taken your own brave steps on the path to peace. This is the correct course because only through negotiated and implemented peace can Israelis live their dream of being both free and secure.

No one knows better the cost the enemies of peace can extract than you, Mr. Prime Minister. You have fought terrorism with your own hands. You have written powerfully about it. You lost your beloved brother to it. The citizens you now lead face the possibility of terrorism every day.

America knows something of this struggle, too. Hundreds of our citizens have perished in terrorist attacks over this generation, most recently at our Embassies in east Africa. We know we must stand strong against terrorism. We are determined to do so just as we are determined to find just and peaceful solutions to conflicts and to overcome longstanding hatred and resentments. We know the closer we get, the more desperate the enemies of peace become. But we cannot let terrorists dictate our future. We will not let their bombs or their bullets destroy our path to peace.

Mr. Prime Minister, at Wye River you obtained commitments that will greatly strengthen Israel's security if they are honored. All of us who shared those 9 days and 9 long nights know you are a skilled and tenacious negotiator. Despite your long sojourn in America, there can be no doubt that you remain a *sabra* to the core, tough, the kind of leader with the potential to guide his people to a peaceful and secure future.

Many have pointed out that you are the first leader of Israel born after 1948, actually born in the State of Israel. But I know you never forget that the history of the Jewish people, as you have told us again tonight, is far, far longer, that the issues of today must

be considered in light of events of a rich but often turbulent past, including 2,000 years of exile and persecution.

We honor your history, your struggles, your sacrifices. We pray for a permanent peace that will, once and for all, secure the rightful place of the people of Israel, living in peace, mutual respect, mutual recognition, and permanent security in this historic land, with the Palestinians and all your neighbors.

You mentioned, Mr. Prime Minister, the fact that my devotion to Israel had something to do with the instruction I received from my minister long ago. I will tell you, the real story is even more dramatic. I hesitate to tell it because then you will use it against me when it is helpful. *[Laughter]*

My pastor died in 1989. Before that, starting in 1937, he came here to the Holy Land more than 40 times. Once in the mid-1980's, we were sitting together, long before I had thought that a realistic prospect, and he looked at me and he said, "You might be President one day. You will make mistakes, and God will forgive you. But God will never forgive you if you forget the State of Israel." That's what he said.

When Hillary first came here with me 17 years ago this month, I was not in elected office. I came on a religious pilgrimage just after we celebrated Christmas. I saw Masada and Bethlehem for the first time, not through political eyes but through the eyes of a Christian. I can't wait to go back to Masada, and I can't wait to go back to Bethlehem.

You mentioned that the troubles and travails and triumphs of Jesus, a Jew, gave the world the Christian religion, of which I am a part. In the Christian New Testament, we get a lot of instruction about what it takes to make peace and become reconciled to one another. We are instructed that we have to forgive others their sins against us if we expect to be forgiven our own. We are instructed that they who judge without mercy will be judged without mercy, but mercy triumphs over judgment. And we are told in no uncertain terms that the peacemakers are blessed, and they will inherit the Earth.

Please join me in a toast to Prime Minister and Mrs. Netanyahu, the people of Israel, and the promise of peace. *L'Chaim.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 p.m. at the Jerusalem Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Netanyahu's wife, Sarah.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza City, Gaza

December 14, 1998

Impeachment

Q. Mr. President, you say you haven't committed perjury. Can you say, sir, that you lied, as some people believe would help?

President Clinton. Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News], I've said what I have to say about that. Now, I'm here furthering America's interests, trying to make peace in the Middle East, to keep this peace process on track. I think it's important. I will say what I've said before: I don't believe it's in the interest of the United States or the American people to go through this impeachment process with a trial in the Senate. That's why I have offered to make every effort to make any reasonable compromise with the Congress. I still believe that, and I'm still willing to do that. That's all I know to do. Meanwhile, I'm going to keep working on my job.

Q. Do you think it's appropriate for the Republican leadership to call for your resignation while you are over here, overseas?

Q. President Clinton, how do you feel being in Gaza?

President Clinton. The boundaries of what's appropriate have been changed rather dramatically in the last several months, I think; you know, they'll have to be the judge of their own conduct. I'm just going to do my job as President.

President's Visit to Gaza

Q. President Clinton, how do you feel being in Gaza for the first time? And is there going to be a withdrawal on Friday?

President Clinton. Well, I want to talk to Chairman Arafat about all these issues related to the Wye agreement. But I'm delighted to be in Gaza for the first time. I'm delighted to be the first President to come on Palestinian territory. And I was very pleased to be at the dedication of the airport

today. One of the important achievements of the Wye River agreement was the commitment to get this airport open and going, and I'm very, very pleased. It's quite beautiful. And I was pleased to be there, and I'm very glad to be here in Chairman Arafat's headquarters, with his team. And we'll talk about all the other issues.

Q. And the withdrawal?

President Clinton. I'll have more to say about that later.

Implementation of the Wye Agreement

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—to be time—[inaudible]—on the implementation of the Wye agreement, as Israel has said to be asking?

President Clinton. Well, I would hope that we would continue to implement the Wye agreement on both sides. I would hope both sides would continue to implement every part of it. And I think it's important that both sides implement every part of it in good faith.

Keep in mind, Wye is not the end of this process. It's simply a means to an end. We also have to get the final status talks going and then get into them in earnest. But these confidence-building measures, which will enable the Palestinians not only to have an airport but to have more freedom of movement, more land, and more economic opportunity, and enable the Israelis to have a greater assurance of security cooperation, I think they're very important to the success of final status talks. So I'm committed to this agreement, and I hope that it will be implemented in a timely and aggressive manner by both sides.

Chairman Arafat. We consider the visit of President Clinton as a historic event for the Palestinian people and for the people in the Middle East. And we are grateful for his visit, and he honored us with this visit today.

We should never forget that under President Clinton's sponsorship, we signed a number of peace agreements at the White House. And through President Clinton, peace will prevail in the Middle East. And this is something that will not be forgotten by the Palestinian people or the Israeli people or the people in the Middle East. And once again, it is a great honor, and we are really proud

to have President Clinton among us here and among the Palestinian people.

I was hoping that logistically we would have been able to have a motorcade, because people are lined up waiting to greet President Clinton on both sides of the road. And I believe perhaps you took a glimpse of the people, flying in the chopper over Gaza, standing on both sides hoping that the motorcade would come by—from the airport, from the airport. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. I would like to say just one other thing. There are two historic elements to this day. One is the opportunity that I have been given simply to come here and to have this meeting and to be a part of the airport dedication. The other is the truly historic meeting that the Chairman has convened of the PNC, the PCC, and the other Palestinian groups, and the opportunity that the Palestinian people, through their elected representatives, will have to make it clear and unequivocal that they are choosing the path of peace and partnership with Israel, and that we hope—I think all of us hope—that this will lead to a changing of hearts and minds throughout this region among all parties, so that it will be easier for everyone to implement the difficult commitments they have made at Wye and will have to make to get the final status talks completed.

This is a truly significant thing, and I, for one, very much appreciate it. It was a part of the Wye River agreements; it showed a lot of courage on Chairman Arafat's part; and I was delighted to be invited here. And so I just want to say how much I personally appreciate this and how much I think it will mean over the long run to the prospects for a successful peace agreement.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12 noon in Chairman Arafat's office. In his remarks, the President referred to the Palestine National Council (PNC) and the Palestinian Central Council (PCC). A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Chairman Arafat in Gaza City

December 14, 1998

Chairman Arafat, Mrs. Arafat, distinguished leaders of the Palestinian community, colleagues, and friends: On behalf of my family and our entire delegation, we thank you for your warm and truly memorable welcome.

Mr. Chairman, as I promised you at Wye River, I have come to Gaza to speak about the benefits of peace based on mutual respect. I know that the circumstances you've faced since 1993 and the signing of the peace have remained difficult, but there are reasons for hope. For the first time in the history of the Palestinian movement, the Palestinian people and their elected representatives now have a chance to determine their own destiny on their own land.

I am proud to be the first American President to stand with the Palestinian people here as you shape your future. I want to emphasize that that future is possible because of the commitment you have made to live in peace and mutual respect with your neighbors, side by side.

All this would have been hard to imagine in the darkest years of struggle, when most people expected the Middle East would always be a separate set of armed camps. Sometimes it takes more courage and more strength to make peace than it does to continue war. I thank Chairman Arafat for having the strength, the courage, and the wisdom to make peace and then to persevere on the path of peace.

I thank the Chairman and, indeed, all Palestinians who embrace the idea that Palestinians and Israelis can share the land of their fathers together. I thank you for believing that the land which gave the world Islam and Judaism and Christianity can be the home of all people who love one God and respect every life our one God has created.

America wants you to succeed, and we will help you to create the society you deserve, a society based on respect for human rights,

human dignity, the rule of law, a society that teaches tolerance, values education, and now, at last, has the chance to unleash the creative power of its people against the destructive pull of hopelessness and poverty.

I think of you at this hopeful moment as a family reuniting after too many years of dislocation and despair; a community of believers helping to build a Middle East in which people of all faiths can live in security and peace; a people known through the world, like the olive tree, for your attachment to this land and now to peace; a society that demands of yourselves what you rightly demand of others.

The way ahead may be hard and uncertain, but the way you have left behind is full of self-defeating violence and soul-withering hate. So we have no choice but the way ahead.

Tomorrow my family and I, along with Chairman and Mrs. Arafat, will have a chance to visit Bethlehem, to light the Christmas tree at the beginning of this season which is so important for those of us who are Christians. The next time people celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem we will be on the edge of a new millennium, marking 2000 years since the birth of the Christ child, who became known to Christians as the Prince of Peace, who happened to be a Jew, who happens to be recognized by Islam.

Now, if all that can be true, surely we can figure out how to solve these problems and go into the future.

I close with these words of the poet, Hafez Ibrahim:

People of a hopeful future, we are in need of leadership which builds and people who construct.

People of a hopeful future, we are in need of wisdom that counsels and a hand that liberates.

People of a hopeful future, we need you; fill the void, get to work.

People of a hopeful future, do not let tomorrow pass like yesterday, in dusty existence.

People of a hopeful future, your country implores you to think. God willing, we will think and feel and act as one.

Thank you. And thank you again.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the Zahrat Al Madian. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Arafat's wife, Shua. The transcript made available by the Office of Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Arafat.

Remarks to the Palestine National Council and Other Palestinian Organizations in Gaza City

December 14, 1998

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Za'anoun, Chairman Arafat, Mrs. Arafat, members of the Palestinian National Council, the Palestinian Central Council, the Palestinian Executive Committee, Palestinian Council Heads of ministries, leaders of business and religion; to all members of the Palestinian community, and to my fellow Americans who come here from many walks of life—Arab-American, Jewish-American—this is a remarkable day. Today the eyes of the world are on you.

I am profoundly honored to be the first American President to address the Palestinian people in a city governed by Palestinians.

I have listened carefully to all that has been said. I have watched carefully the reactions of all of you to what has been said. I know that the Palestinian people stand at a crossroads: behind you a history of dispossession and dispersal, before you the opportunity to shape a new Palestinian future on your own land.

I know the way is often difficult and frustrating, but you have come to this point through a commitment to peace and negotiations. You reaffirmed that commitment today. I believe it is the only way to fulfill the aspirations of your people, and I am profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Chairman Arafat for the cause of peace, to come here as a friend of peace and a friend of your future, and to witness you raising your hands, standing up tall, standing up not only against what you believe is wrong but for what you believe is right in the future.

I was sitting here thinking that this moment would have been inconceivable a decade ago: no Palestinian Authority; no elections in Gaza and the West Bank; no relations between the United States and Palestinians;

no Israeli troop redeployments from the West Bank and Gaza; no Palestinians in charge in Gaza, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Tulkarem, Jenin, Nablus, Jericho, and so many other places; there was no Gaza International Airport.

Today I had the privilege of cutting the ribbon on the international airport. Hillary and I, along with Chairman and Mrs. Arafat, celebrated a place that will become a magnet for planes from throughout the Middle East and beyond, bringing you a future in which Palestinians can travel directly to the far corners of the world; a future in which it is easier and cheaper to bring materials, technology, and expertise in and out of Gaza; a future in which tourists and traders can flock here, to this beautiful place on the Mediterranean; a future, in short, in which the Palestinian people are connected to the world.

I am told that just a few months ago, at a time of profound pessimism in the peace process, your largest exporter of fruit and flowers was prepared to plow under a field of roses, convinced the airport would never open. But Israelis and Palestinians came to agreement at Wye River, the airport has opened, and now I am told that company plans to export roses and carnations to Europe and throughout the Gulf, a true flowering of Palestinian promise.

I come here today to talk about that promise, to ask you to rededicate yourselves to it, to ask you to think for a moment about how we can get beyond the present state of things where every step forward is like, as we say in America, pulling teeth. Where there is still, in spite of the agreement at Wye—achieved because we don't need much sleep, and we worked so hard, and Mr. Netanyahu worked with us, and we made this agreement. But I want to talk to you about how we can get beyond this moment, where there is still so much mistrust and misunderstanding and quite a few missteps.

You did a good thing today in raising your hands. You know why? It has nothing to do with the government in Israel. You will touch the people of Israel.

I want the people of Israel to know that for many Palestinians, 5 years after Oslo, the benefits of this process remain remote, that for too many Palestinians lives are hard, jobs

are scarce, prospects are uncertain, and personal grief is great. I know that tremendous pain remains as a result of losses suffered from violence, the separation of families, the restrictions on the movement of people and goods. I understand your concerns about settlement activity, land confiscation, and home demolitions. I understand your concerns and theirs about unilateral statements that could prejudge the outcome of final status negotiations. I understand, in short, that there's still a good deal of misunderstanding 5 years after the beginning of this remarkable process.

It takes time to change things and still more time for change to benefit everyone. It takes determination and courage to make peace and sometimes even more to persevere for peace. But slowly but surely, the peace agreements are turning into concrete progress: the transfer of territories, the Gaza industrial estate, and the airport. These changes will make a difference in many Palestinian lives.

I thank you—I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership for peace and your perseverance, for enduring all the criticism from all sides, for being willing to change course, and for being strong enough to stay with what is right. You have done a remarkable thing for your people.

America is determined to do what we can to bring tangible benefits of peace. I am proud that the roads we traveled on to get here were paved, in part, with our assistance, as were hundreds of miles of roads that knit together towns and villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

Two weeks ago, in Washington, we joined with other nations to pledge hundreds of millions of dollars toward your development, including health care and clean water, education for your children, rule of law projects that nurture democracy. Today I am pleased to announce we will also fund the training of Palestinian health care providers and airport administrators, increase our support to Palestinian refugees. And next year I will ask the Congress for another several hundred million dollars to support the development of the Palestinian people.

But make no mistake about it, all this was made possible because of what you did, because 5 years ago you made a choice for

peace, and because through all the tough times since, when in your own mind you had a hundred reasons to walk away, you didn't, because you still harbor the wisdom that led to the Oslo accords that led to the signing in Washington in September of '93—you still can raise your hand and stand and lift your voice for peace.

Mr. Chairman, you said some profound words today in embracing the idea that Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace as neighbors. Again I say you have led the way, and we would not be here without you.

I say to all of you, I can come here and work; I can bring you to America, and we can work, but in the end, this is up to you—you and the Israelis. For you have to live with the consequences of what you do. I can help because I believe it is my job to do so; I believe it is my duty to do so; because America has Palestinian-Americans, Jewish-Americans, other Arab-Americans who desperately want us to be helpful. But in the end, you have to decide what the understanding will be, and you have to decide whether we can get beyond the present moment where there is still, for all the progress we have made, so much mistrust. And the people who are listening to us today in Israel, they have to make the same decisions.

Peace must mean many things: legitimate rights for Palestinians—[applause]—legitimate rights for Palestinians, real security for Israel. But it must begin with something even more basic: mutual recognition, seeing people who are different, with whom there have been profound differences, as people.

I've had two profoundly emotional experiences in the last less than 24 hours. I was with Chairman Arafat, and four little children came to see me whose fathers are in Israeli prisons. Last night, I met some little children whose fathers had been killed in conflict with Palestinians, at the dinner that Prime Minister Netanyahu had for me. Those children brought tears to my eyes. We have to find a way for both sets of children to get their lives back and to go forward.

Palestinians must recognize the right of Israel and its people to live safe and secure lives today, tomorrow, and forever. Israel must recognize the right of Palestinians to

aspire to live free today, tomorrow, and forever.

And I ask you to remember these experiences I had with these two groups of children. If I had met them in reverse order, I would not have known which ones were Israeli and which Palestinian. If they had all been lined up in a row and I had seen their tears, I could not tell whose father was dead and whose father was in prison or what the story of their lives were, making up the grief that they bore. We must acknowledge that neither side has a monopoly on pain or virtue.

At the end of America's Civil War, in my home State, a man was elected Governor who had fought with President Lincoln's forces, even though most of the people in my home State fought with the secessionist forces. And he made his inaugural speech after 4 years of unbelievable bloodshed in America, in which he had been on the winning side but in the minority in our home. And everyone wondered what kind of leader he would be. His first sentence was, "We have all done wrong." I say that because I think the beginning of mutual respect, after so much pain, is to recognize not only the positive characteristics of people on both sides but the fact that there has been a lot—a lot—of hurt and harm.

The fulfillment of one side's aspirations must not come at the expense of the other. We must believe that everyone can win in the new Middle East. It does not hurt Israelis to hear Palestinians peacefully and proudly asserting their identity, as we saw today. That is not a bad thing. And it does not hurt Palestinians to acknowledge the profound desire of Israelis to live without fear. It is in this spirit that I ask you to consider where we go from here.

I thank you for your rejection fully, finally, and forever of the passages in the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Israel. For they were the ideological underpinnings of a struggle renounced at Oslo. By revoking them once and for all, you have sent, I say again, a powerful message not to the Government but to the people of Israel. You will touch people on the street there. You will reach their hearts there.

I know how profoundly important this is to Israelis. I have been there four times as President. I have spent a lot of time with people other than the political leaders, Israeli schoolchildren who heard about you only as someone who thought they should be driven into the sea. They did not know what their parents or grandparents did that you thought was so bad. They were just children, too. Is it surprising that all this has led to the hardening of hearts on both sides, that they refuse to acknowledge your existence as a people and that led to a terrible reaction by you?

By turning this page on the past, you are taking the lead in writing a new story for the future. And you have issued a challenge to the Government and the leaders of Israel to walk down that path with you. I thank you for doing that. The children of all the Middle East thank you.

But declaring a change of heart still won't be enough. Let's be realistic here. First of all, there are real differences. And secondly, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge, as we used to say at home. An American poet has written, "Too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart." Palestinians and Israelis and their pasts both share a history of oppression and dispossession; both have felt their hearts turn to stone for living too long in fear and seeing loved ones die too young. You are two great people of strong talent and soaring ambition, sharing such a small piece of sacred land.

The time has come to sanctify your holy ground with genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Every influential Palestinian, from teacher to journalist, from politician to community leader, must make this a mission to banish from the minds of children glorifying suicide bombers, to end the practice of speaking peace in one place and preaching hatred in another, to teach schoolchildren the value of peace and the waste of war, to break the cycle of violence. Our great American prophet, Martin Luther King, once said, "The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind."

I believe you have gained more in 5 years of peace than in 45 years of war. I believe that what we are doing today, working together for security, will lead to further gains and changes in the heart. I believe that our

work against terrorism, if you stand strong, will be rewarded, for that must become a fact of the past. It must never be a part of your future.

Let me say this as clearly as I can: No matter how sharp a grievance or how deep a hurt, there is no justification for killing innocents.

Mr. Chairman, you said at the White House that no Israeli mother should have to worry if her son or daughter is late coming home. Your words touched many people. You said much the same thing today. We must invest those words with the weight of reality in the minds of every person in Israel and every Palestinian.

I feel this all the more strongly because the act of a few can falsify the image of the many. How many times have we seen it? How many times has it happened to us? We both know it is profoundly wrong to equate Palestinians, in particular, and Islam, in general, with terrorism or to see a fundamental conflict between Islam and the West. For the vast majority of the more than one billion Muslims in the world, tolerance is an article of faith and terrorism a travesty of faith.

I know that in my own country, where Islam is one of the fastest growing religions, we share the same devotion to family and hard work and community. When it comes to relations between the United States and Palestinians, we have come far to overcome our misperceptions of each other. Americans have come to appreciate the strength of your identity and the depth of your aspirations. And we have learned to listen to your grievances as well.

I hope you have begun to see America as your friend. I have tried to speak plainly to you about the need to reach out to the people of Israel, to understand the pain of their children, to understand the history of their fear and mistrust, their yearning, gnawing desire for security, because that is the only way friends can speak and the only way we can move forward.

I took the same liberty yesterday in Israel. I talked there about the need to see one's own mistakes, not just those of others; to recognize the steps others have taken for peace, not just one's own; to break out of the politics

of absolutes; to treat one's neighbors with respect and dignity. I talked about the profound courage of both peoples and their leaders which must continue in order for a secure, just, and lasting peace to occur; the courage of Israelis to continue turning over territory for peace and security; the courage of Palestinians to take action against all those who resort to and support violence and terrorism; the courage of Israelis to guarantee safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza and allow for greater trade and development; the courage of Palestinians to confiscate illegal weapons of war and terror; the courage of Israelis to curtail closures and curfews that remain a daily hardship; the courage of Palestinians to resolve all differences at the negotiating table; the courage of both peoples to abandon the rhetoric of hate that still poisons public discourse and limits the vision of your children; and the courage to move ahead to final status negotiations together, without either side taking unilateral steps or making unilateral statements that could prejudice the outcome, whether governing refugee settlements, borders, Jerusalem, or any other issues encompassed by the Oslo accord.

Now, it will take good faith, mutual respect, and compromise to forge a final agreement. I think there will be more breakdowns, frankly, but I think there will be more breakthroughs, as well. There will be more challenges to peace from its enemies. And so I ask you today never to lose sight of how far you have come. With Chairman Arafat's leadership already you have accomplished what many said was impossible. The seemingly intractable problems of the past can clearly find practical solutions in the future. But it requires a consistent commitment and a genuine willingness to change heart.

As we approach this new century, think of this, think of all the conflicts in the 20th century that many people thought were permanent that have been healed or are healing: two great World Wars between the French and the Germans—they're best friends; the Americans and the Russians, the whole cold war—now we have a constructive partnership; the Irish Catholics and Protestants; the Chinese and the Japanese; the black and white South Africans; the Serbs, the Croats,

and the Muslims in Bosnia—all have turned from conflict to cooperation. Yes, there is still some distrust; yes, there's still some difficulty; but they are walking down the right road together. And when they see each other's children, increasingly they only see children, together. When they see the children crying, they realize the pain is real, whatever the child's story. In each case there was a vision of greater peace and prosperity and security.

In Biblical times, Jews and Arabs lived side by side. They contributed to the flowering of Alexandria. During the Golden Age of Spain, Jews, Muslims, and Christians came together in an era of remarkable tolerance and learning, a third of the population laid down its tools on Friday, a third on Saturday, a third on Sunday. They were scholars and scientists, poets, musicians, merchants, and statesmen setting an example of peaceful co-existence that we can make a model for the future. There is no guarantee of success or failure today, but the challenge of this generation of Palestinians is to wage an historic and heroic struggle for peace.

Again I say this is an historic day. I thank you for coming. I thank you for raising your hands. I thank you for standing up. I thank you for your voices. I thank you for clapping every time I said what you were really doing was reaching deep into the heart of the people of Israel. Chairman Arafat said he and Mrs. Arafat are taking Hillary and Chelsea and me—we're going to Bethlehem tomorrow. For a Christian family to light the Christmas tree in Bethlehem is a great honor.

It is an interesting thing to contemplate that in this small place, the home of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, the embodiment of my faith was born a Jew and is still recognized by Muslims as a prophet. He said a lot of very interesting things. But in the end, He was known as the Prince of Peace. And we celebrate at Christmastime the birth of the Prince of Peace. One reason He is known as the Prince of Peace is He knew something about what it takes to make peace. And one of the wisest things He ever said was, "We will be judged by the same standard by which we judge, but mercy triumphs over judgment."

In this Christmas season, in this Hanukkah season, on the edge of Ramadan, this is a time for mercy and vision and looking at all of our children together. You have reaffirmed the fact that you now intend to share this piece of land without war, with your neighbors, forever. They have heard you. They have heard you.

Now, you and they must now determine what kind of peace you will have. Will it be grudging and mean-spirited and confining, or will it be generous and open? Will you begin to judge each other in the way you would like to be judged? Will you begin to see each other's children in the way you see your own? Will they feel your pain, and will you understand theirs?

Surely to goodness, after 5 years of this peace process and decades of suffering and after you have come here today and done what you have done, we can say, "Enough of this gnashing of teeth. Let us join hands and proudly go forward together."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Hall at the Shawwa Center. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker Salim Za'anoun of the Palestine National Council; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, and his wife Shua.

Statement on the Puerto Rico Status Referendum

December 14, 1998

I have advocated enabling the people of Puerto Rico to determine their future status among all the options—continuing the current governing arrangement, known as Commonwealth; nationhood, either independent from or in an association with the U.S.; and statehood. This year the House passed a bipartisan bill for this purpose, with my support, but the Senate majority leadership blocked it. In the end, the leadership simply recognized Puerto Ricans' right to choose and promised to review the results.

Yesterday Puerto Ricans voted on these issues under local law. A majority of the vote was not for any of the options. Among the rest, the overwhelming majority supported statehood.

I will, therefore, work with Members of Congress and the people of Puerto Rico and their leaders to enable Puerto Ricans to clarify their choice among the options. I remain committed to implementing a majority choice for Puerto Rico's future status.

Remarks Following Trilateral Discussions and an Exchange With Reporters at Erez Crossing, Israel

December 15, 1998

Good morning, everybody. I just had a very good meeting, a very frank meeting, with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat. First, everyone agrees that yesterday's convening of all the Palestinian groups and the vote by the Palestinian National Council and the others to fully and forever reject the conflict with Israel and commit to a path to peace and cooperation was a truly historic day.

And what we focused on in our meeting is how to follow up on that, where do we go from here, how can we vigorously implement the process that we agreed to at Wye. And I'd like to just—I have a few notes here from the meeting—I'd like to go over them with you.

The first thing that we agreed to do was to energize the permanent status talks. Keep in mind, the purpose of the Wye agreement was to resolve the matters that had to be resolved so we could get into permanent status talks and try to get back as close as possible to the timetable set out in 1993.

Secondly, we agreed to vigorously pursue the security issue through the appropriate committee. There is, I think, no space between the two sides in their understanding that maintaining security cooperation and minimizing security problems is the precondition to making all the rest of this work. It's what made Wye possible.

Thirdly, the prisoner issue, as you know, is a difficult one, but an informal channel has been agreed to for dealing with that, and it was agreed to—referred all the questions to that channel and to pursue that accordingly.

Fourthly, there is a so-called steering committee which is basically a clearinghouse for

a lot of the other specific issues agreed to at Wye, questions of law enforcement, of weapons handling, of all the specifics there. They are going to meet today, and I anticipate that there will be agreement at the end of the day, at the end of this meeting, that a lot of the requirements of Wye for this next phase have, in fact, been met.

Then there are some other issues that I would like to mention, all of which we agreed to establish to deal with through established committee procedures: Education—I talked about this in my speech in Gaza yesterday, the importance of teaching children that a commitment has been made by these two people to be partners and to share this land together. It's a very important issue to the Israelis and one I think that the Palestinians recognize. Second, the economic committee, which is very important. And thirdly, one big issue that has been agreed to but the details haven't been worked out is the whole question of safe passage. And there is a committee on safe passage, and I expect it to meet if not today, then very shortly to continue to push forward on that.

So the message of this trip is that yesterday was a historic day. It was a very important day for both peoples. Again, I want to compliment and applaud Chairman Arafat and all the others who were at that meeting who made the decision, clear, public, and unambiguous, that we now have to decide practical means to go forward, and I think we are well on the way to doing that. So I have achieved what I came here to achieve, and I expect the Secretary of State to be back here in several weeks, and we'll just keep at it.

Israeli Troop Redeployment

Q. Mr. President, will the redeployment that is scheduled for Friday go ahead?

The President. Well, I think the proper way to answer that is that the Israeli Government in my meeting reaffirmed its commitment to the Wye process. And so we have to resolve a number of issues in order for the redeployment to go forward. I think it would be unfortunate if we got too far behind schedule, and I hope we can keep pretty much to the schedule that's there. But obviously, that remains to be worked out here.

We believe in keeping to these schedules as much as possible, and we worked very hard to put all this back on track here. I do think that we are back on track. We're going to see this through, and I feel good about where we are now.

Q. This clearinghouse you're speaking about—

Trilateral Meeting

Q. Are they talking again?

The President. Oh, yes, yes. We sat there for however long, an hour and 25 minutes today, with all the parties in the room, including the major members of each side's team, as well as the leaders, and everybody had their say. And there was some—we got beyond people stating their own positions to actual conversation, and I'm quite hopeful. I think the proof is always in what happens tomorrow, not what happens today, but I think at least we've got a process set up and we can go forward.

Middle East Peace Process and Domestic Political Problems

Q. Mr. President, have you been able to insulate the peace process from the domestic political problems affecting you and the Prime Minister?

The President. Oh, absolutely.

Q. How so?

The President. You show up for work every day. It's not a complicated thing.

Clearinghouses

Q. These clearinghouses, are these to clear those obstacles that stand in the way of Netanyahu going through with the next phase of the withdrawal? Is this to satisfy him that these various issues like unilateral declarations are being resolved so he can go ahead? I don't understand the clearinghouse.

The President. No, no. What I am saying is—no, there is a steering committee that we had set up at Wye that is supposed to deal with things like—

Q. Well, yes, prisoners, for instance.

The President. No, no, that's different. It's supposed to deal with things like—the steering committee deals with things like the weapons confiscation and destruction issue, the size of the police forces, all those specific

issues that were set up at Wye not being dealt with in the security committee, not being dealt with in the informal channel on prisoners, not being dealt with in some other way.

And so what I would say, as I think you will get a report before the end of the day here that these folks have gotten together, the reports have been made, and I think a determination will be made that a number of the requirements of the Wye agreement have been met so that we can go forward. But this is a complicated matter, obviously, and I hope we can stay as close to the schedule as possible.

***Prime Minister Netanyahu's
Preconditions***

Q. He set preconditions for going in. His latest one was unilateral declarations of statehood. He said that yesterday. Before that, it was the covenant. You got the covenant taken care of. What I am trying to determine is whether his preconditions have been swept away.

The President. Well, the meeting we did yesterday was part of the Wye agreement. The other question is one that I think both sides should observe, which is, it is okay to advocate how you want this to come out. That's okay. Neither side should try to stop the other from saying what their vision of the future is. That would be a terrible mistake. But it is not okay to imply that we're not going to resolve all the matters that were listed in the Oslo agreement for negotiations by negotiations. That is what we've got to do, and that's where I think the line ought to be drawn and the balance ought to be struck. If we stick with that, you know, we'll have fits and starts; it will be hard parts, but we'll get through this. We'll get through this just fine, and it will come out where it ought to.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Matak Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on the Death of A. Leon
Higginbotham, Jr.**

December 15, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Throughout his life as a scholar, lawyer, and judge, Leon Higginbotham was one of our Nation's most passionate and steadfast advocates for civil rights.

When Leon Higginbotham was named to the Federal bench at the age of 36 by President Kennedy, he was the youngest Federal judge to be appointed in three decades. He served with distinction and eventually became judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. He also found the time to write and speak with idealism and rigor on the great dilemmas of race and justice. And because of this remarkable service and his indelible spirit, I had the honor in 1995 to award Judge Higginbotham the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to citizens in the United States.

His retirement was spent remarkably—helping to draft the Constitution for a democratic South Africa and teaching a fresh generation of students at Harvard. Judge Higginbotham's life, as much as his scholarship, set an example of commitment, enlargement, and service to young minds at home and abroad.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and their four children.

**Address to the Nation Announcing
Military Strikes on Iraq**

December 16, 1998

Good evening. Earlier today I ordered America's Armed Forces to strike military and security targets in Iraq. They are joined by British forces. Their mission is to attack Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological programs and its military capacity to threaten its neighbors. Their purpose is to protect the national interest of the United States and, indeed, the interest of people throughout the Middle East and around the world. Saddam Hussein must not be allowed to threaten his

neighbors or the world with nuclear arms, poison gas, or biological weapons.

I want to explain why I have decided, with the unanimous recommendation of my national security team, to use force in Iraq, why we have acted now, and what we aim to accomplish.

Six weeks ago Saddam Hussein announced that he would no longer cooperate with the United Nations weapons inspectors, called UNSCOM. They are highly professional experts from dozens of countries. Their job is to oversee the elimination of Iraq's capability to retain, create, and use weapons of mass destruction and to verify that Iraq does not attempt to rebuild that capability. The inspectors undertook this mission, first, 7½ years ago, at the end of the Gulf war, when Iraq agreed to declare and destroy its arsenal as a condition of the cease-fire.

The international community had good reason to set this requirement. Other countries possess weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. With Saddam, there's one big difference: He has used them, not once but repeatedly, unleashing chemical weapons against Iranian troops during a decade-long war, not only against soldiers but against civilians; firing Scud missiles at the citizens of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Iran, not only against a foreign enemy but even against his own people, gassing Kurdish civilians in northern Iraq.

The international community had little doubt then, and I have no doubt today, that left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will use these terrible weapons again.

The United States has patiently worked to preserve UNSCOM, as Iraq has sought to avoid its obligation to cooperate with the inspectors. On occasion, we've had to threaten military force, and Saddam has backed down. Faced with Saddam's latest act of defiance in late October, we built intensive diplomatic pressure on Iraq, backed by overwhelming military force in the region. The U.N. Security Council voted 15 to zero to condemn Saddam's actions and to demand that he immediately come into compliance. Eight Arab nations—Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman—warned that Iraq alone would bear

responsibility for the consequences of defying the U.N.

When Saddam still failed to comply, we prepared to act militarily. It was only then, at the last possible moment, that Iraq backed down. It pledged to the U.N. that it had made, and I quote, "a clear and unconditional decision to resume cooperation with the weapons inspectors." I decided then to call off the attack, with our airplanes already in the air, because Saddam had given in to our demands. I concluded then that the right thing to do was to use restraint and give Saddam one last chance to prove his willingness to cooperate.

I made it very clear at that time what "unconditional cooperation" meant, based on existing U.N. resolutions and Iraq's own commitments. And along with Prime Minister Blair of Great Britain, I made it equally clear that if Saddam failed to cooperate fully, we would be prepared to act without delay, diplomacy, or warning.

Now, over the past 3 weeks, the U.N. weapons inspectors have carried out their plan for testing Iraq's cooperation. The testing period ended this weekend, and last night, UNSCOM's Chairman, Richard Butler, reported the results to U.N. Secretary-General Annan. The conclusions are stark, sobering, and profoundly disturbing.

In four out of the five categories set forth, Iraq has failed to cooperate. Indeed, it actually has placed new restrictions on the inspectors. Here are some of the particulars:

Iraq repeatedly blocked UNSCOM from inspecting suspect sites. For example, it shut off access to the headquarters of its ruling party and said it will deny access to the party's other offices, even though U.N. resolutions make no exception for them and UNSCOM has inspected them in the past.

Iraq repeatedly restricted UNSCOM's ability to obtain necessary evidence. For example, Iraq obstructed UNSCOM's effort to photograph bombs related to its chemical weapons program. It tried to stop an UNSCOM biological weapons team from videotaping a site and photocopying documents and prevented Iraqi personnel from answering UNSCOM's questions.

Prior to the inspection of another site, Iraq actually emptied out the building, removing

not just documents, but even the furniture and the equipment. Iraq has failed to turn over virtually all the documents requested by the inspectors; indeed, we know that Iraq ordered the destruction of weapons-related documents in anticipation of an UNSCOM inspection.

So Iraq has abused its final chance. As the UNSCOM report concludes, and again I quote, "Iraq's conduct ensured that no progress was able to be made in the fields of disarmament. In light of this experience and in the absence of full cooperation by Iraq, it must, regrettably, be recorded again that the Commission is not able to conduct the work mandated to it by the Security Council with respect to Iraq's prohibited weapons program."

In short, the inspectors are saying that, even if they could stay in Iraq, their work would be a sham. Saddam's deception has defeated their effectiveness. Instead of the inspectors disarming Saddam, Saddam has disarmed the inspectors.

This situation presents a clear and present danger to the stability of the Persian Gulf and the safety of people everywhere. The international community gave Saddam one last chance to resume cooperation with the weapons inspectors. Saddam has failed to seize the chance.

And so we had to act, and act now. Let me explain why.

First, without a strong inspections system, Iraq would be free to retain and begin to rebuild its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs in months, not years.

Second, if Saddam can cripple the weapons inspections system and get away with it, he would conclude that the international community, led by the United States, has simply lost its will. He will surmise that he has free rein to rebuild his arsenal of destruction. And some day, make no mistake, he will use it again, as he has in the past.

Third, in halting our airstrikes in November, I gave Saddam a chance, not a license. If we turn our backs on his defiance, the credibility of U.S. power as a check against Saddam will be destroyed. We will not only have allowed Saddam to shatter the inspections system that controls his weapons of mass destruction program; we also will have

fatally undercut the fear of force that stops Saddam from acting to gain domination in the region.

That is why, on the unanimous recommendation of my national security team, including the Vice President, Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Adviser, I have ordered a strong, sustained series of airstrikes against Iraq. They are designed to degrade Saddam's capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction, and to degrade his ability to threaten his neighbors. At the same time, we are delivering a powerful message to Saddam: If you act recklessly, you will pay a heavy price.

We acted today because, in the judgment of my military advisers, a swift response would provide the most surprise and the least opportunity for Saddam to prepare. If we had delayed for even a matter of days from Chairman Butler's report, we would have given Saddam more time to disperse his forces and protect his weapons.

Also, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan begins this weekend. For us to initiate military action during Ramadan would be profoundly offensive to the Muslim world and, therefore, would damage our relations with Arab countries and the progress we have made in the Middle East. That is something we wanted very much to avoid without giving Iraq a month's headstart to prepare for potential action against it.

Finally, our allies, including Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain, concurred that now is the time to strike.

I hope Saddam will come into cooperation with the inspection system now and comply with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. But we have to be prepared that he will not, and we must deal with the very real danger he poses. So we will pursue a long-term strategy to contain Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction and work toward the day when Iraq has a Government worthy of its people.

First, we must be prepared to use force again if Saddam takes threatening actions, such as trying to reconstitute his weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems, threatening his neighbors, challenging allied

aircraft over Iraq, or moving against his own Kurdish citizens. The credible threat to use force and, when necessary, the actual use of force, is the surest way to contain Saddam's weapons of mass destruction program, curtail his aggression, and prevent another Gulf war.

Second, so long as Iraq remains out of compliance, we will work with the international community to maintain and enforce economic sanctions. Sanctions have cost Saddam more than \$120 billion, resources that would have been used to rebuild his military. The sanctions system allows Iraq to sell oil for food, for medicine, for other humanitarian supplies for the Iraqi people. We have no quarrel with them. But without the sanctions, we would see the oil-for-food program become oil-for-tanks, resulting in a greater threat to Iraq's neighbors and less food for its people.

The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region, the security of the world. The best way to end that threat once and for all is with a new Iraqi Government, a Government ready to live in peace with its neighbors, a Government that respects the rights of its people.

Bringing change in Baghdad will take time and effort. We will strengthen our engagement with the full range of Iraqi opposition forces and work with them effectively and prudently.

The decision to use force is never cost-free. Whenever American forces are placed in harm's way, we risk the loss of life. And while our strikes are focused on Iraq's military capabilities, there will be unintended Iraqi casualties. Indeed, in the past, Saddam has intentionally placed Iraqi civilians in harm's way in a cynical bid to sway international opinion. We must be prepared for these realities. At the same time, Saddam should have absolutely no doubt: If he lashes out at his neighbors, we will respond forcefully.

Heavy as they are, the costs of action must be weighed against the price of inaction. If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond, we will face a far greater threat in the future. Saddam will strike again at his neighbors. He will make war on his own people. And mark my words, he will develop

weapons of mass destruction. He will deploy them, and he will use them. Because we are acting today, it is less likely that we will face these dangers in the future.

Let me close by addressing one other issue. Saddam Hussein and the other enemies of peace may have thought that the serious debate currently before the House of Representatives would distract Americans or weaken our resolve to face him down. But once more, the United States has proven that, although we are never eager to use force, when we must act in America's vital interests, we will do so.

In the century we're leaving, America has often made the difference between chaos and community, fear and hope. Now, in a new century, we'll have a remarkable opportunity to shape a future more peaceful than the past but only if we stand strong against the enemies of peace. Tonight, the United States is doing just that.

May God bless and protect the brave men and women who are carrying out this vital mission, and their families. And may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Foreign Policy Team and an Exchange With Reporters

December 17, 1998

Military Strikes on Iraq

The President. My national security team is about to update me and the Vice President on the status of our operation in Iraq. I'd like to begin by speaking for every American in expressing my gratitude to our men and women in uniform and also to our British allies, who are participating in this operation with us.

I am convinced the decision I made to order this military action, though difficult, was absolutely the right thing to do. It is in our interest and in the interest of people all around the world. Saddam Hussein has used weapons of mass destruction and ballistic

missiles before; I have no doubt he would use them again if permitted to develop them.

When I halted military action against Saddam last November, after he had terminated the UNSCOM operations, I made it very clear that we were giving him a last chance to cooperate. Once again he promised in very explicit terms that he would fully cooperate. On Tuesday the inspectors concluded that they were no longer able to do their jobs and that, in fact, he had raised even new barriers to their doing their jobs.

Then yesterday morning I gave the order because I believe that we cannot allow Saddam Hussein to dismantle UNSCOM and resume the production of weapons of mass destruction with impunity. I also believe that to have done so would have, in effect, given him a green light for whatever he might want to do in his neighborhood. I think it would be a terrible, terrible mistake.

We acted yesterday because Secretary Cohen and General Shelton strongly urged that we act at the point where we could have maximum impact with minimum risk to our own people because of the surprise factor. We also wanted to avoid initiating any military action during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which is slated to begin in just a couple of days.

Our mission is clear: to degrade his capacity to develop and to use weapons of mass destruction or to threaten his neighbors. I believe we will achieve that mission, and I'm looking forward to getting this briefing.

Impeachment and Military Strikes on Iraq

Q. Mr. President, how are you going to stem the Republican drive to drive you out of office?

The President. Well, the Constitution has a procedure for that, and we will follow it.

Q. Mr. President, as you know, Senator Trent Lott and Dick Armey, the House majority leader, and other Republicans are questioning the timing, suggesting that this was simply a diversionary tactic to avoid an impeachment vote on the House floor. What do you say to those critics?

The President. That it's not true, that what I did was the right thing for the country. I don't think any serious person would be-

lieve that any President would do such a thing. And I don't believe any reasonably astute person in Washington would believe that Secretary Cohen and General Shelton and the whole rest of the National Security team would participate in such an action. This was the right thing for the country.

We have given Saddam Hussein chance after chance to cooperate with UNSCOM. We said in November that this was the last chance. We got the report from Mr. Butler saying that he was not cooperating and, in fact, raised new barriers to cooperation. And we acted just as we promised we would. We acted swiftly because we were ready, thanks to the very fine work of the Defense Department in leaving our assets properly deployed. We had the strong support of the British.

And I might add, I'm very gratified by the strong support we've gotten from people among both Democratic and Republican ranks in the Congress who are interested in national security, people like Senator Helms, Senator McCain, Senator Warner, Senator Hagel, Senator Lugar, all have expressed support for this mission. So I feel good about where we are on that.

Q. Mr. President, will you confirm reports on ground troops in Kuwait?

Q. [Inaudible]—on the first day of the operation and would it undercut your authority if the House opened the impeachment debate during this operation?

The President. What was the first question, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]?

Q. Bomb damage assessment.

The President. I'm about to get it.

Q. You didn't get any from Mr. Berger?

The President. Obviously, I've kept up with it as best I could, but I have not gotten a full report.

Q. But you think it is a success?

The President. I'm about to get a—it's an ongoing mission. I want to wait—

Q. Because Joe Lockhart told us it was a success.

Q. And he undercut your authority, sir?

The President. No. First of all, I'm going to complete this mission—we're going to complete this mission. And the Republican leaders will have to decide how to do their job. That's not for me to comment on.

Kuwait

Q. Can you confirm reports of Saddam Hussein possibly advancing and invading Kuwait and the possible use of ground troops, sir?

The President. No, I have no comment on that. I think that surely he knows what a disastrous mistake that would be.

Civilian Casualties in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the Iraqis are saying there's been heavy civilian casualties in this. Do you have any information so far that that's true?

The President. I do not. I can tell you what I said last night: We did everything we could to carefully target military and national security targets and to minimize civilian casualties. There is always a prospect that the missiles will miss, that they will be interrupted because of the missiles being fired at them, trying to deflect them from their intended targets. I am quite sure there will be, as I said last evening, unintended casualties, and I regret that very much.

That's one of the reasons that I have bent over backwards, not just in November but also on previous occasions to avoid using force in this case. I did not want to do it; I think all of you know it. But in November, we literally had planes in the air, and I said that it would be the last chance. I think it is very important that we not allow Saddam Hussein to destroy the UNSCOM system without any penalty whatever, to eventually get all these sanctions lifted and to go right on just as if he never made any commitments that were unfulfilled on this score. I think it would have been a disaster for us to do this.

And so, regrettably, I made this decision. There is, I believe, no way to avoid some unintended civilian casualties, and I regret it very much. But I believe far, far more people would have died eventually from this man's regime had we not taken this action.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Richard Butler, executive chairman, United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 7160—Wright Brothers Day, 1998

December 17, 1998

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On a December morning 95 years ago, over the windswept sands of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Orville and Wilbur Wright turned humanity's age-old dream of powered flight into reality. The two brothers, bicycle mechanics by trade and visionaries by nature, had worked painstakingly for years to construct the first power-driven craft that was heavier than air and capable of controlled, sustained flight. After persevering through many trials and discouraging setbacks, they made their fourth trip to Kitty Hawk in 1903 and, on December 17, with Orville at the controls and Wilbur running alongside, their airplane took flight and took us into a new era. The achievement of the Wright brothers was not only a great personal success and a vindication of years of creative effort and methodical experimentation—it was also a feat of historic significance for the future of humankind.

Almost a century later, the same passion and power of imagination that spurred the Wright brothers are fueling the dreams of a new generation of Americans. From John Glenn's second historic space flight to the construction of the International Space Station, we continue to open new frontiers and expand our horizons. Just as the Wright brothers' inventions and achievements created a new industry and revolutionized transportation, commerce, and communication, today's missions into space hold great promise for the development of new technologies and industries to benefit all humanity and strengthen our hopes for lasting peace and prosperity for nations across the globe.

This November, I was pleased to sign into law the Centennial of Flight Commemoration Act, which establishes a commission to coordinate the celebration in 2003 of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight. The commission's activities will raise public awareness of the enormous contributions of the Wright brothers to human progress; remind the world of the triumph of American ingenuity, inventiveness, and diligence in developing new technologies; and inspire all Americans to recognize that the daring, creativity, and spirit of adventure reflected in the achievement of the Wright brothers will be crucial to the success of our Nation in the 21st century.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 169), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 1998, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 21, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 22.

Executive Order 13109—Half-Day Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Thursday, December 24, 1998
December 17, 1998

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the

United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall be closed and their employees excused from duty for the last half of the scheduled workday on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1998, except as provided in section 2 below.

Sec. 2. The heads of executive departments and agencies may determine that certain offices and installations of their organizations, or parts thereof, must remain open and that certain employees must remain on duty for the full scheduled workday on December 24, 1998, for reasons of national security or defense or for other essential public reasons.

Sec. 3. Thursday, December 24, 1998, shall be considered as falling within the scope of Executive Order 11582 and of 5 U.S.C. 5546 and 6103(b) and other similar statutes insofar as they relate to the pay and leave of employees of the United States.

Sec. 4. This order shall apply to executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government only and is not intended to direct or otherwise implicate departments or agencies of State or local governments.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 17, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 21, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 22.

Remarks Honoring Eunice Kennedy Shriver at the Special Olympics Dinner
December 17, 1998

Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you. Pretty rowdy crowd tonight. [Laughter] I am delighted to join Hillary in welcoming all of you here. We're delighted to have you at this remarkable celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Special Olympics.

Let me say just for a moment, I am also thinking tonight about the brave American men and women in uniform who are carrying out our mission in Iraq with our British allies.

I know that our thoughts and our prayers, indeed, those of all the American people, are with them tonight. And I wanted to say that what they are doing is important. It will make the world a safer, more peaceful place for our children in the 21st century.

I'd also like to say a word now about the Special Olympics. More than 30 years ago Eunice Kennedy Shriver had an idea as simple as it was revolutionary, to give young people with disabilities the chance to know the thrill of athletic competition, the joy of participation, the pride of accomplishment. Out of that powerful idea, dreamed up at a kitchen table and launched at a backyard in Rockville, Maryland, Special Olympics grew and grew and grew.

Just think of it—if you can remember back to the time before the Special Olympics, many people actually believed that people with disabilities were incapable of performing the most basic, every day activities, let alone competing in sports. But this year, 30 years later, there are more than one million Special Olympic athletes throwing the javelin, swimming the 500-meter butterfly, walking the balance beam—something most of the rest of us cannot do—[laughter]—and inspiring hope all over the world.

So tonight I ask all of you to stand and join me in toasting Eunice Kennedy Shriver; her wonderful family, who have supported her every step of the way; to all the people who work so hard year-in and year-out to make Special Olympics possible, and to the athletes who are an inspiration to us all; to Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics. Ladies and gentlemen, Eunice Shriver.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Remarks at the Conclusion of the Special Olympics Dinner

December 17, 1998

Thank you. This has been a wonderful night. Hillary and I want to thank all the artists who have graced this stage. They have brought something special to this part of the White House lawn and this beautiful tent that we've never had before. They certainly have helped to put us all in the holiday spirit, including our good friend, Whoopi, who I thought was terrific tonight, even in the breaks.

I feel very proud to be a part of this special evening, to pay tribute to Special Olympics. Tonight we celebrate 30 years of breaking down barriers and building up hope, 30 years of widening the circle of opportunity, 30 years of helping Americans with disabilities to reach their highest potential. Tonight we celebrate the victory of the human spirit. We see the power of that spirit every single time an athlete like Loretta runs a race, every time a young person realizes the wonder that he can swim faster than almost anybody else in the pool, every time a parent's heart fills with pride as her child steps with confidence onto the winner's block, and every time a volunteer learns the joy of helping people with disabilities to make the most of their abilities.

As Special Olympics enters its fourth decade, this legacy is being passed from generation to generation, in a circle of hope, as the children of Special Olympics volunteers take their place in the dugouts and on the sidelines and as former competitors become coaches and mentors to new young athletes. The Special Olympics torch, which began as a small flicker of light in 1968 in Chicago, now burns brightly all around the world as a symbol of acceptance and pride.

Tonight, we thank all of you, every single one of you who have made this possible: the Shriver and Kennedy families, without whose vision there would be no Special Olympics; the thousands of supporters and volunteers whose dedication sustains that vision; the

millions of athletes whose courage inspires and challenges all of us. And we salute the next generation of Special Olympics heroes who will keep that flame alive in the 21st century.

Now, I'd like to ask all the artists here with us tonight to come back on stage and sing just one more song for you. Eunice, and all the rest of us, and for Special Olympics.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:10 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to comedian Whoopi Goldberg; Special Olympics athlete Loretta Clairborne; and Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder, Special Olympics. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of First Lady Hillary Clinton.

United States-European Union Joint Statement on Cooperation in the Western Balkans

December 18, 1998

Political, civil, and economic instability in some areas of the Western Balkans threatens peace and prosperity in all southeastern Europe and poses serious challenges across Europe and beyond. During the past six months, we have achieved notable successes and are agreed on further cooperative steps in the Western Balkans.

Our envoys in Kosovo, Ambassadors Chris Hill and Wolfgang Petritsch, are working as a team to conclude successfully negotiations on an interim political settlement for Kosovo. In Kosovo, the U.S. and EU are collaborating to ensure implementation of the October 16 OSCE-FRY Agreement, notably in the OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). We are extremely concerned that recent acts of violence in Kosovo could spiral out of control, and call on all parties to preserve the cease fire and cooperate fully with KVM.

We remain committed to enhancing quickly confidence-building and to supporting civil society in Kosovo. The EU welcomes the U.S. initiative to begin quick impact efforts in Kosovo immediately. The U.S. welcomes the European Union's intention to play the leadership role in organizing the inter-

national community's response on reconstruction issues, and pledges its full support. The EU intends to organize an expert-level meeting in January 1999, following the conclusion of the ongoing damage assessment mission. Once a political agreement is in place, further concrete steps on assisting reconstruction and on democratization and civic development will be taken, including convening a donors' conference. We look to the international community to contribute substantially towards the speedy implementation of these endeavors. At present, humanitarian aid should continue, responding to the most urgent needs, in close cooperation between the U.S. and EU and under the coordination of UNHCR, which is the lead agency for humanitarian aid as well as for the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.

We expect the Albanian, as well as the Bosnian, authorities to take primary responsibility for stabilizing their respective countries and leading them towards full democracy and economic development.

In Albania, we worked together to form the Friends of Albania, which the EU co-chairs with the OSCE; we are both making a substantial political and material commitment to stabilization, democratization and economic reform. We have taken note of the new Government's pledges at the Tirana Conference October 30 to move towards those goals. We welcome the adoption of the new Constitution, which is a fundamental first step in that direction. We strongly urge all political parties to cooperate in the democratic process in the interest of all Albanian people.

We have furthered our cooperation in support of Dayton implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Croatia. The Bosnian national elections in September further advanced democracy and pluralism in that country. The U.S. and EU continue to provide resources to assist Dayton implementation efforts. We call on the authorities in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to consistently support Dayton implementation efforts and contribute to the process of stabilization and national reconciliation, including by supporting the return of refugees and displaced persons to their previous homes as

a matter of priority. Job creation, through self-sustaining economic development, will help stabilize the political and social situation and will enhance the return to a multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. Economic revitalization is essential for sustainable returns, especially in minority areas.

We call on all in the region to support efforts to establish security and economic stability. Without this support, resolving regional conflicts and advancing democratic, civic, and economic reform is only more difficult. We will use our political and economic resources to support those who support these efforts and, more generally, to advance an agenda of democracy, progress toward self-sustaining free market economics, and normal relations with their neighbors. We condemn steps taken by the government in Belgrade to suppress independent media and political opposition, and express strong support for emerging democracy and political pluralism in Montenegro. A Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that respects the democratic and human rights of its citizens and that upholds its international obligations is essential for regional peace and security and its own integration into Europe.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint declaration.

**United States-European Union
Statement on Cooperation in the
Global Economy**
December 18, 1998

The U.S. and the EU are engines for global economic growth. We share a common vision of a market-based global economy and particular responsibilities for promoting stability, continued growth and prosperity. We must lead the way in keeping markets open. A rules-based international trade system and a strengthened international financial system are necessary to ensure transparency and predictability and to maintain public confidence in the benefits of open economies. We are concerned about the serious social and economic impact of the financial crisis on many countries, and we will work together with them in the face of their major economic difficulties.

We are committed to promoting open markets through further broad-based liberalization, including through strengthening the multilateral trading system, and through the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) on which we agreed in London in May. We have drawn up, and started to implement, a Joint Action Plan to pursue this Partnership. It will contribute to further market opening and strengthening of links between the U.S. and EU economies in ways that support and point the way for further multilateral liberalization, while benefiting our peoples. The TEP initiative will enable us to launch bilateral negotiations for the further reduction of trade barriers. We have now set in train a regular and comprehensive dialogue between us on multilateral trade issues and future World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. We attach high importance to the full respect of multilateral rules. We are determined to resolve trade disputes between us.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement, which entered into force December 1, is an example of how the U.S. and EU are striving to remove transatlantic barriers. The agreement covers six sectors and will save our private sectors as much as \$1 billion annually. In reducing trade barriers, we re-affirm our commitment to preserving high levels of health, safety, consumer and environmental protection. We strongly support the current bilateral discussions aimed at achieving high standards of data privacy protection and avoiding transatlantic interruptions in exchanges of personal data. While continuing current efforts to avoid such interruptions, we would like to conclude the discussions successfully as soon as possible.

We intend to enhance our economic dialogue and cooperation, both bilaterally and in the context of international institutions and fora, to ensure that we act in a coherent and constructive manner.

We agree on the need to strengthen the international financial system and national financial sectors in order to capture the full benefits of international capital flows and global markets, minimize disruption and better protect the poorest and most vulnerable. It is important that all in the global economy play their part to promote sustainable growth

and financial stability, by pursuing economic policies aimed at strengthening their national economy and enhancing their economic performance. We reiterate the importance of implementing the October 30 recommendations of G7 Leaders and G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and look forward to additional proposals that they will develop, in consultation with other key countries, prior to the Cologne Summit.

We welcome the impending introduction of the Euro on January 1, 1999, which will be an event of historic significance. We look forward to a successful European Economic and Monetary Union that contributes to growth and to stability in the international monetary system.

We reaffirm our commitment to development cooperation, which has among its main objectives the fight against poverty, the creation of conditions favorable to economic growth and sustainable development, and the participation of the most vulnerable in this process. The prompt and generous U.S. and EU responses to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America are an example of our commitment. We will seek to ensure good coordination of international donor assistance to respond effectively to crises.

We call upon developing countries and economies in transition to continue the liberalization of trade and to develop clear, stable, and open regimes for investment. We urge the crisis-affected countries to promote sustainable recovery by pursuing full and proper economic restructuring. We support IMF conditionality as a means to promote sound macroeconomic policies. We welcome the fact that several governments have acted swiftly to minimize the negative impact of the crisis. We stress the importance of good governance and the respect for human rights, including core labor standards, efficient and transparent institutions, and more effective investment in education, training, and research. We will seek to ensure and support fuller participation of the developing countries in the WTO and in future multilateral trade negotiations, with a view to better integrating them into the world economic system. In particular, we will seek to improve the trading opportunities for the least devel-

oped countries. We will each continue to support regional integration efforts.

Senior officials will report to the next U.S.-EU Summit on the practical implementation of this cooperation on the global economy.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

United States-European Union Declaration on the Middle East Peace Process

December 18, 1998

The signature on October 23 of the Wye River Memorandum broke a dangerous deadlock in the Middle East and opened the perspective for new progress in the Peace Process. We welcome implementation of the first phase of the Memorandum by both sides. We call on the parties to implement fully the remaining obligations, and thereby contribute to rebuilding the confidence essential to the completion of the Peace Process begun at Madrid and Oslo.

We will work together, including through our respective envoys, in the political and economic area, to build on this achievement and to help the parties move the Peace Process forward to a successful conclusion. We will use our partnership to support the implementation of outstanding elements of the Interim Agreement. We will work for the early resumption of the Multilateral Track of the Process. We will also seek ways to help the parties in the Lebanese and Syrian tracks to restart negotiations with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement.

Alongside other participants at the November 30 Washington Conference to Support Middle East Peace and Development, we made significant additional pledges of economic assistance to the West Bank and Gaza for the next five years. Against this background, the U.S. and the EU will continue their leading roles in the Palestinian donor effort in order to ensure that international assistance translates into tangible improvements in the living conditions of the Palestinians, starting at the coming meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in February in Germany.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint declaration.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

**Joint United States-European Union
Statement on Chapter IV New
Transatlantic Agenda Dialogues**
December 18, 1998

The United States and European Union affirm their commitment to the process of strengthening and broadening public support on both sides of the Atlantic for the U.S.-EU partnership by fostering "people-to-people" transatlantic links between non-governmental actors. We applaud the steps taken during the Austrian EU Presidency to further the process of building bridges across the Atlantic, in particular, the establishment of the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue and the on-going and constructive input we receive from the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. We have given encouragement to the Transatlantic Labor Dialogue to develop further its program of work. Building on work that began this year, we look forward to the formal launching of a Transatlantic Environmental Dialogue early next year. We welcome contacts that are taking place between development NGOs with a view to the possibility of establishing a Transatlantic Development Dialogue.

We look forward to these dialogues providing recommendations to us on an ongoing basis on issues of mutual concern, as they have done for today's Summit. We welcome input from these dialogues as well as other sectors of society to help shape our agenda.

We will work with all of the transatlantic dialogues to ensure that lines of communication to government are balanced and open. We will work with the dialogues to help ensure their sustainability. This process will require resources and support from outside of government, and we will encourage the development of links with the private sector, including foundations. We reaffirm our commitment to support initiatives to deepen the commercial, social, cultural, scientific and educational ties between our respective societies. We recognize that there is much that our transatlantic communities can learn from one another.

**Digest of Other
White House Announcements**

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 12

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Tel Aviv, Israel, arriving in the evening.

December 13

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton had breakfast with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and his wife, Sarah, in the Presidential Suite at the Jerusalem Hilton Hotel. Later, the President greeted U.S. Cabinet members and Members of Congress in the Aqua Restaurant at the hotel.

Later, the President met with Prime Minister Netanyahu in the Cabinet Room at Mr. Netanyahu's office complex.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton visited the grave of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem.

Later, the President met with President Ezer Weizman of Israel in the Jerusalem Room at Beit Hanassi.

December 14

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Gaza City, Gaza. Upon their arrival, they toured the main terminal of Gaza International Airport with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and his wife, Shua.

In the afternoon, the President met with Chairman Arafat in the Cabinet Room at Mr. Arafat's office complex.

In the early evening, the President returned to Jerusalem, Israel.

December 15

In the morning, the President traveled to Bethlehem. Later, the President and Hillary

Clinton toured the Church of the Nativity with Chairman Arafat and his wife, Shua.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton participated in a Christmas tree lighting at the Church of the Nativity. Later, they traveled to Masada, where they toured the historic site.

In the late afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Tel Aviv. In the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

December 16

In the morning, the President met with the national security team concerning the situation in Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President met with Representative Amo Houghton concerning the upcoming vote on the articles of impeachment.

The President announced his intention to appoint Anita Ray Arnold, Robert B. Barnett, Anita (Buffy) Cafritz, and Kenneth M. Duberstein to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 17

In the morning in the Oval Office, the President was briefed on the military operations in Iraq by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, and the national security team. Later in the day, the President had separate telephone conversations concerning the ongoing operations in Iraq with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein I of Jordan, and President Jacques Chirac of France, as well as Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, House Majority Leader Bob Livingston, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle, and House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt.

The White House announced that the President released \$102.2 million of emergency supplemental funding included for the Army Corps of Engineers in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, to carry out critical dredging activities and other repairs needed to maintain safe channels at navigation projects in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi,

Florida, and Puerto Rico that were damaged by Hurricane Georges and other tropical storms.

December 18

In the morning, the President met with Representative Christopher Shays.

In the afternoon, the President met with Chancellor Viktor Klima of Austria in his capacity as President of the European Council and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission in the Cabinet Room.

In the evening, the President met with members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS in the Cabinet Room.

The President announced the recess appointment of William Clyburn, Jr., as a member of the Surface Transportation Board. Mr. Clyburn was nominated on September 2, 1997. The President intends to resubmit his nomination when the 106th Congress convenes.

The President announced the recess appointment of Albert S. Jacquez as Administrator of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation at the Department of Transportation. Mr. Jacquez was nominated to the Senate on September 29, 1998. The President intends to resubmit his nomination when the 106th Congress convenes.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: The Congress having adjourned *sine die* on October 21, no nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 12

Transcript of remarks by Special Counsel Gregory Craig on the House Judiciary Committee vote on impeachment

Released December 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's visit to the Middle East

Released December 14

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Al Gore on additional police officers and new technologies

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the President's visit to the Middle East

Released December 15

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Al Gore at the All-American Cities Awards presentation

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's visit to the Middle East

Released December 16

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Al Gore at the Business and Entrepreneurial Roundtable

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of remarks by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart announcing the President's address to the Nation on military strikes on Iraq

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on military strikes on Iraq

Released December 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California

Released December 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Stuart Eizenstat and NSC Senior Director for European Affairs Don Bandler on the European Union-U.S. summit

Senior Level Group Report to the U.S.-EU Summit

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.
